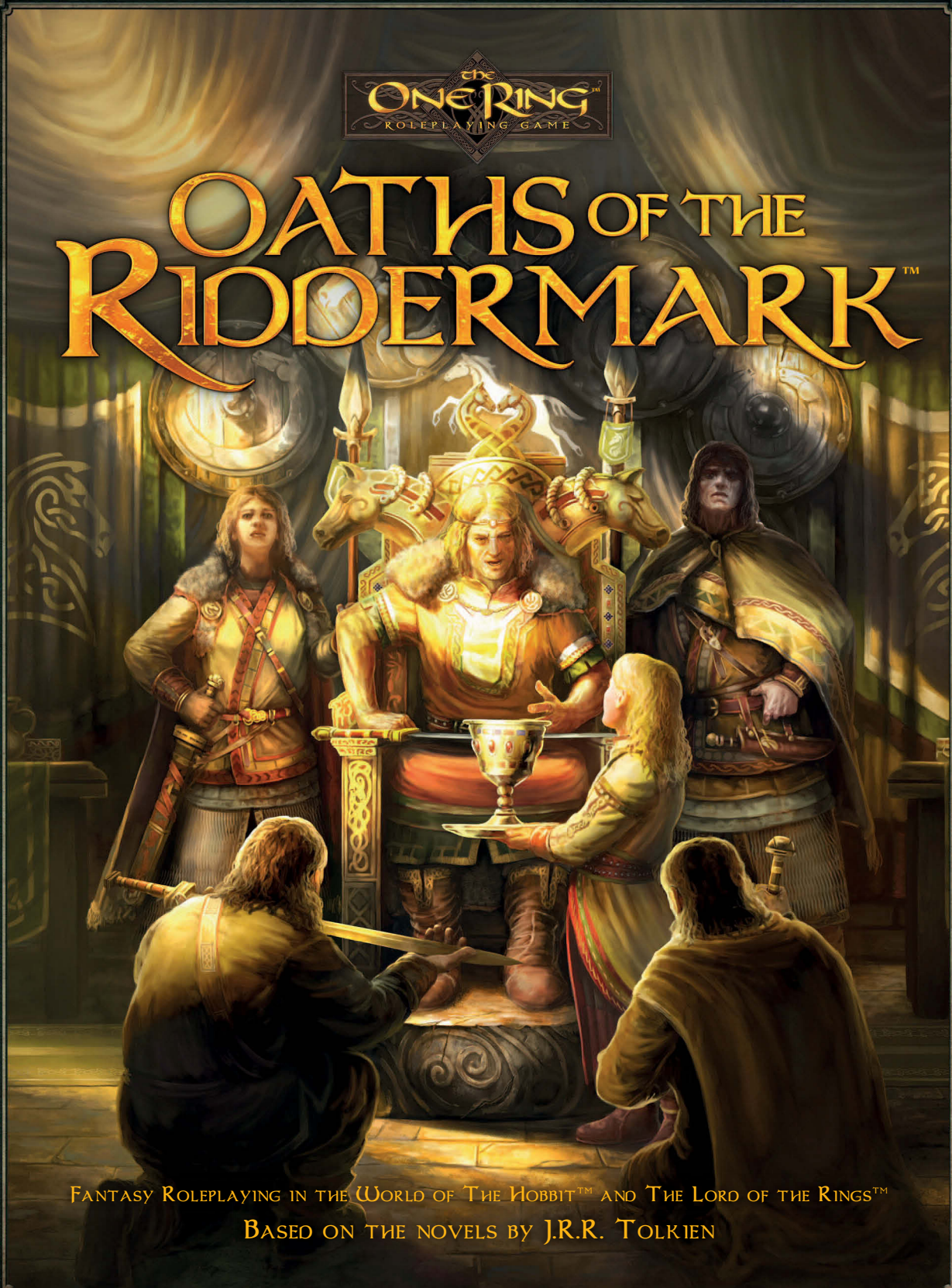
The One Ring™
Roleplaying Game

Oaths of the Riddermark™



Fantasy Roleplaying in the World of The Hobbit™ and The Lord of the Rings™

Based on the novels by J.R.R. Tolkien

- CREDITS -

Written by Gary Astleford, Jon Hodgson, Shane Ivey, TS Luikart, Francesco Nepitello, Ken Spencer
***The One Ring* rules designed by** Francesco Nepitello and Marco Maggi.

Art Director: Jon Hodgson
Cover Art by by Sam Manley
Art by Andrew Hepworth, Jon Hodgson, Jason Juta, Sam Manley, Jan Pospisil, Naomi Robinson
Edited by TS Luikart, Andrew Kenrick and Amanda Valentine
Graphic Design and Layout: Paul Bourne
Line Development Team: Jon Hodgson, Robert Hyde, Dominic McDowall and Francesco Nepitello.
Proofread by David Rea and Jacob Rodgers

Published by Sophisticated Games Ltd, 3 Andersen Court, Newnham Road, Cambridge CB3 9EZ, UK and Cubicle 7 Entertainment Ltd, Suite D3, Unit 4, Gemini House, Hargreaves Road, Groundwell Industrial Estate, Swindon, SN25 5AZ, UK

© Sophisticated Games 2017 © Cubicle 7 Entertainment 2017

The One Ring, Middle-earth, The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, and the characters, items, events and places therein are trademarks or registered trademarks of The Saul Zaentz Company d/b/a Middle-earth Enterprises and are used under license by Sophisticated Games Ltd and their respective licensees.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

~ contents ~

Introduction 4
How to Use this Guide 6
The Passing of Years 6

Blood on the Snow 7
Adventuring Phase 7
Part One – To Edoras! 7
Part Two – Northward Bound 10
Part Three – Stepping into Darkness 13
Part Four – The Horse-eater 16
Epilogue 18

Red Days Rising 19
Adventuring Phase 19
Part One – Wisdom of the Riders 19
Part Two – Flytes at the Ford 24
Part Three – Where the Sky-Spear Falls 27
Part Four – The River-reavers 33
Part Five – A Blood-Red Evening 42
Epilogue 45

Wrath of the Riders 46
Adventuring Phase 46
Part One – The Marshal's Command 47
Part Two – Beyond the Crossings 48
Part Three – Into the Red Moor 50
Part Four – Warriors' Words 52
Part Five – The Chieftain and the Barrow-witch 56
Part Six – The Grey Horse 60
Aftermath 65

Black Horses, Black Deeds 66
Adventuring Phase 66
Part One – By Order of the Marshal 67
Part Two – The Village of Stotfold 69
Part Three – Fury in the Darkness 72
Part Four – Merchants Most Foul 77
Part Five – Turning the Tables 79
Part Six – Sharp Words 81
Part Seven – Victory and Regret 86
Aftermath 87

Below the Last Mountain 88
Adventuring Phase 88
Part One – The Two Marshals 89
Part Two – The Villages of West-march 91
Part Three – The Raider's Trail 93
Part Four – The Orc Camp 97
Part Five – Distant Kin 100
Part Six – Hunters and Hunted 101
Epilogue – Return to Grimslade 104

The Woes of Winter 106
Adventuring Phase 106
Part One – A Gathering of Rivals 107
Part Two – The Murder of Ceorl the Bold 111
Part Three – The Bride's Horse 113
Part Four – Fell Tidings 115
Part Five – Red Fell the Snow 118
Epilogue 123
A Wedding Feast 124
Aftermath 124

Loremaster Characters Appendix 125

Pre-generated Characters 127
Aelfilda 128
Dúnhere 130
Herubrand 132
Saewara of Starkhorn 134
Thuna 136
Wulf 138

Index 140

- Introduction -

This guide contains six ready-to-play adventures for your company of heroes, complete scenarios that can be played separately, or as a linked series of adventures spanning a number of years.

All adventures are set in Rohan after the year 2955, during the rule of King Thengel, father of Théoden, but there is no canonical requirement for a certain year, so you can set them earlier or later depending on the needs of your campaign.

These adventures all draw strongly on the setting information contained in *Horse-lords of Rohan*, and that supplement will provide a useful companion to this anthology.

The adventures are all designed for a group of young Riders of Rohan characters, or novice heroes who swiftly find themselves in the service of Thengel King.

We Come from the North!

If your players want to play a company of heroes from Wilderland, venturing south to find glory in the Riddermark, it is recommended that at least one of them play a Rider of Rohan instead, to guide them in this distant land, or else provide a reason to become involved with the politics of the Rohirrim.

Perhaps Thengel King, himself a stranger to his own people, has decided that only a band of outsiders can bring his warring people together. Be warned though, as such a choice add a level of difficulty to the adventures, as the Rohirrim do not let strangers meddle in their own affairs easily.

(If a company is already complete, you might consider to add to its members one of the pre-generated characters found in the Appendix as a Loremaster character).

The six adventures are:

Blood on the Snow
A terrible beast hunts the Westfold Vale, slaying horses. As the company investigates, they discover a band of Dunlendings hunting the beast, for it has been preying on their people too. High up in the White Mountains, the companions must face evil of many kinds to emerge triumphant.

Red Days Rising
Tensions mount between the Second and Third Marshals of the Riddermark, threatening bloodshed between the Rohirrim. Thengel King asks the heroes to make peace between the Marshals, suggesting a marriage between their two households. But in order to be heard, they will have to earn the trust of bitter foes.

Wrath of the Riders
The Rohirrim have long fought against the tribes of Dunlendings beyond their border, but must it always be this way? Thengel King has set a task before the Second Marshal, Éogar of Westfold – to make peace with the tribes of Dunland. Éogar wants no part of it, so instead sets a task before the company...

Black Horses, Black Deeds
Orcs threaten the borders of Eastfold and a band of brigands have murdered horse-traders travelling along the great West Road. Cenric, the Third Marshal, cannot spare the riders to track them, so asks the companions to bring them to justice. The brigands are horse-thieves exiled from Gondor, stealing black horses to sell to ill-favoured merchants serving the Dark Lord...

Below the Last Mountain
When a great band of Dunlendings are seen making for the Fords of Isen, the company is dispatched to find out what threat they pose. They discover the Dunlendings are refugees, fleeing before marauding Orcs from the White Mountains, intent on taking slaves. The company must hunt down the Orcs, in particular their hated leader, Gazhur Three-Deaths.

The Woes of Winter
The fragile peace brokered between the marshals is to be bound by the wedding of Esmund Son of Edwin and Mildryd Shielding. But Orcs of the White Mountains and tribes out of the Dunland Fells have crossed into Rohan, threatening to test the bonds of loyalty and kinship when battle is joined. The company must ensure kinstrife is put

to one side and the oaths of the Riddermark upheld on the field of battle.

The Trials of Thengel King

While each of the adventures can be played on its own, when played together they form a story arc of linked adventures telling the tale of the early part of Thengel's reign. The first adventure finds Thengel newly crowned King of Rohan, but the households of his marshals at one another's throats, a division deliberately fostered by his father, King Fengel.

As the players play each adventure, they should find themselves more and more invested in helping Thengel King bring his divided people together. Each adventure presents a different challenge facing the Rohirrim, and the success or failure of the player-heroes in helping the Eorlingas overcome these adversities will have lasting repercussions for the Riddermark.

Succeed and Rohan will stand united, Thengel's reign one of peace and bounty. Fail and Rohan will be divided, Thengel's reign marred by continued kinstrife and resentment.

How to Use this Guide

Most of the adventures presented in this guide are self-contained, and can be played as single quests without reference to any past or future adventures. You can pick the most appropriate adventures to run based on the composition of your players' company and their journeys across Rohan.

Blood on the Snow provides a short introductory adventure to allow the company access to the great and good of Rohan. **Wrath of the Riders, Black Horses, Black Deeds** have no direct links to the other adventures, save continuing to illustrate the various troubles of Thengel King. **Red Days Rising, Below the Last Mountain** and **The Woes of Winter** are much more closely interlinked, but a Loremaster can pick the connections apart easily enough (for example, in **Below the Last Mountain** the assembly of the marshals might be removed, and the wedding taking place in **The Woes of Winter** need not be related to prior events).

Alternatively, you can combine all six adventures into a short campaign (see **The Trials of Thengel King** box, opposite), in which case they should be played in the order presented in this guide.

The Passing of Years

If you want to follow the default pacing of gameplay suggested in *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, playing all the adventures contained in *Oaths of the Riddermark* should take several years. Every scenario offers plenty of opportunities to keep the companions busy for a year of game time, as the players can easily follow their Adventuring phase with a fruitful Fellowship phase, or even start a supplemental Adventuring phase building upon the consequences of the previous one.

Even if you don't feel comfortable with playing one adventure per year, we suggest that you at least let one year pass for every two adventures. A tight pace of gameplay could be as follows:

Blood on the Snow can occur in early 2959.

Red Days Rising could be run as the first adventure of 2960, starting and ending in Edoras. **Wrath of the Riders** could then follow in the summer of the same year, with the heroes dispatched to Helm's Deep on a mission for the King. A Year's End Fellowship phase could then follow, set in Edoras.

Black Horses, Black Deeds could then follow as the first adventure of 2961, with the companions meeting up at Edoras once again before riding for Aldburg. **Below the Last Mountain** is suited as the last adventure in the year, taking place that autumn. A Year's End Fellowship phase could then follow, based either in Grimslade, Helm's Deep or Edoras.

The Woes of Winter might be either the last adventure of 2962 or the very first adventure early in 2963.

- Blood - on the snow

- **When:** This short, introductory adventure can be set in the early spring of any year between 2955 and 2965.

- **Where:** The adventure begins with the company already in or arriving at Edoras, to discover Thengel King has urgent need of brave adventurers. It then moves through Westfold before concluding in the White Mountains above Helm's Deep.

- **What:** Several steadings have been attacked, their horses slain. Reports tell that many have died attempting to defend their animals. Due to unfolding events at Edoras, the King cannot spare the warriors he would normally send. Rumour has it that Dunlendings are killing and eating horses of the Mark.

- **Why:** This quest is an opportunity for the company to win favour with the King, and become known in Rohan.

- **Who:** The companions meet many different characters in the Mark, exemplifying the contrasts and tumults stirring in the realm.

Adventuring Phase

The adventure is divided into four parts, which begin in Meduseld and end in the mountains surrounding Helm's Deep.

Part One - To Edoras!

The company is in Edoras, looking for adventure. Ominous reports have reached the city from Westfold and someone must be dispatched to discover what has occurred and if possible put it right.

Part Two - Northward Bound

The company travels into the foothills of the White Mountains to learn more about the events that have transpired. Discovering the ruin of several homesteads they begin to piece together the story. Some great beast has been attacking homesteads and eating their horses.

Part Three - Stepping into Darkness

The company begin tracking the creature in earnest, meeting a group of Dunlending hunters who have also come to destroy the creature they claim hunts their land.

Part Four - The Horse-eater

The company catch up with their dread quarry, and learn something about hatred.

Epilogue

The company return to Meduseld, gaining favour with the King, laying the foundations for the next adventure.

- Part One - To Edoras!

Edoras is a natural destination for any group of adventurers entering the Mark of the Riders. Perhaps the companions already live here and are looking to embark on a life of adventure. On their way to the capital, or in the drinking halls and stables of Edoras, they hear some or all of the following rumours. Companions from Rohan may even hold some of these ideas to be true:

- There are caves in the White Mountains so shaped that the wind blowing through tells secrets.

- The Dunlendings hate us because in the Mark we know how to ride, and they don't.

- The Dunlendings eat horse meat, curse them! They know we raise the finest horses, and they make the finest prize for those foul Dunlending horse-eaters.

- The Dunlendings work sorcery! They control animals through wicked spells, and this has brought them much bad luck. We have no truck with such things, and that's why fortune always favours us.

- A farming family were killed in their beds by Dunlendings. Honest people cannot trust them - they are not even truly Men! They are something different, cunning beasts walking on two legs.

- Some Dunlendings have proven themselves to be decent, and some can swing a sword in the right direction, but they are the exception.

- Up near the White Mountains, the Dunlendings have been attacking isolated farmsteads in the name of centuries-old grudges. This shows how they don't understand proper war.

- Orcs in numbers have been sighted in the White Mountains, and no one knows where they come from. We need to take action immediately and face this threat - The King must settle the squabbles of his Marshals once and for all!

- The winter has been long and hard. There are wolves roaming the Mark, bolder than ever. They've been harrying our herds of horses. The King must do something about it.

On arrival in Edoras the company will find the place in a state of some excitement. Armed men and women march with purpose on one errand or another, and parties of Riders seem to be heading out to the East.

If they ask around no one seems to be willing to say what is happening: *"If you don't know, then it is not for you to know"*. If the company comprises mostly Riders of Rohan they will be told with a roll of an eye: *"Oh you know the old rhyme - The Marshals! A strong sword arm needs work or it finds trouble, and the King likes to keep both his sword hands occupied."*

Sooner or later our heroes will be told that if they're looking for work, or something to occupy their enquiring minds, then they should head to the Reeve's House, which they will find on the road up to Meduseld. Groups of capable and wily warriors are being sought for some unusual mission.

In Search of Adventure

On their way to the Reeve's House, the company will encounter Ulfúr, a Rider from Edoras. He is heading the same way, with his band of fellows. They are the very essence of the Men of the Mark, tall, clad in long coats of shining knot-edged mail, with fierce thatches of blonde and red hair woven in thick braids. Their shoulders are decked with furs, their arms and fingers bear many gold rings. They are fierce men and women of Rohan, girt for war, and are glorious to behold.

Ulfúr will eye the company up and down: if they are from the Mark he will know something of them, and if they hail from beyond Edoras he will be highly suspicious of what they are doing here in lands that are not their own. He is however always keen to boast, and will delight in telling them of his deeds. Once a minstrel, he slew a man in the mead hall for stealing his song.

Now he sings only a song of battle: disgraced at court he roams the Mark as a sellsword. While he is very brash, he has a twinkle in his eye and a smile as quick as his temper. It's hard not to like him and his melodious voice, even if he is very boastful. Many warriors aspire to be this self-assured.

The Reeve's Address

Arriving at the Reeve's House, the company find a small group of armed warriors gathered around the porch. The

Reeve, the city officer in charge of speaking for the King in his absence, is about to address them:

"The winter has been hard, and the King's warriors are all committed to urgent matters in the East. Thengel King bids you unsworn warriors to take now his coin, and one of these maps. They will lead the willing to the Westfold Vale, from where come tales of horses and kin slain. The loyal will discover the culprits of this horse-murder and right any wrongs they uncover in the name of Thengel King."

At this point Ulfúr spits on the ground. *"Dunlendings! Horse-eaters and kinslayers all! Too long has the King allowed them to breed in the Western Marches. Well do I understand this quest, and long have I wished for it. Certain it is to me that the culprits are the dark-haired and dirty dogs of Dunland. Let us ride to bring steel to the savages. A good day this!"*

The Reeve hands out a small gold coin, struck with the symbol of a leaping horse, to all those who volunteer to undertake the mission - it is clear any who take this coin are bound to the quest.

Companies Gather

Three groups of adventurers and sellswords are formed: Ulfúr leads one, the player-heroes forming another, and a third comprising a motley crew of Riders from Harrowdale, led by a dark-haired shieldmaiden, Léora; She and her companions eye Ulfúr warily - whether it is his constant boasts, or his constant stream of disdain for the Dunlendings that cause their reticence is unclear.

The Reeve brings out a number of sets of carved bones, cunningly linked together on rings of bronze. He assigns one set to each company, instructing them on how to hold them up, to align their shape with the peaks of the mountains and thereby use holes drilled into them to navigate to the foothills of the White Mountains. Each bone map features different sets of marks, corresponding to the farmsteads that must be visited, investigated and secured by each company.

It is expected that the groups of adventurers will obtain mounts for the journey, and if they have none, the Reeve can point them to stables able to provide them horses to speed their progress on the King's mission, along with stern imprecations to bring back their mounts in as good a condition as they were loaned them. This "advice" is very seriously delivered, and none will have any doubt about the consequences of losing a loaned horse from Edoras.

The Other Companies

If the company take the time prior to leaving to find out more about their competitors, they will easily find someone who has heard of Ulfúr, and knows him to be boastful but strong, and a proud son of the Mark. Most like him, while also knowing to be wary of him in his cups. Many share his views on the threat posed by the Dunlendings, and his easy solutions are popular. It is true that he slew a fellow minstrel, though the cause is disputed. Some say he was simply jealous of his rival's clear voice. Others say he slew a man of Dunlending blood, because he couldn't bear Dunlending songs to be heard in Edoras. On the contrary, no one knows much about Léora: if asked, anyone from Edoras dismisses her and her company as being "a sad-faced lot, those ones, as everyone from that ill-fated valley."

- Part Two -
Northward Bound

All bone maps direct the companies to head northwest. When it's time to leave, the companions see that Ulfúr is taking it easy, drinking with friends at Cépa's House; if asked about their intentions, Ulfúr answers that he and his men all ride fine horses and see no reason to hurry. Léora is nowhere to be seen – her company must have set out already.

Secret Plans

Ulfúr considers himself to be very clever: his plan is to keep an eye on the other questing companies, to eventually sweep in at the best opportunity and reap the benefits of their work. (His scheme will come to fruition in Part Four). The company led by Léora is a wild card for the Loremaster to hold close.

Her actions can be ignored, having her follow her own bone map and never cross paths with the companions, or she can be made part of the plot, as the sister of the minstrel that Ulfúr murdered – in that case, she joins the quest to spy on Ulfúr, hoping to find a way to disgrace him, if not to avenge her brother.

On the Road

The journey from Edoras to the Westfold Vale allows the company to follow the great West Road for a time, speeding their journey. While no longer repaired as well as it was in times gone by, the ancient road still helps the company greatly. Unfortunately, there is little cover from the elements out on the road and eventually moving closer to the forested foothills becomes a necessity.

Westfold is studded with small farming settlements all across the plains stretching to the Westemnet. Individual steadings line the foothills, with Helm's Deep itself resting along the western reaches of the northernmost spur of the White Mountains. The plains are mostly covered with snow now, though more and more areas of discoloured winter grass are evident. As spring waxes, rich green grasses will soon appear, stretching out in all directions.

- It is 50 miles from Edoras to the first of the steadings assigned to the company, which lie deep in the foothills of the mountains. The journey will take two days (while riding horses) requiring a single Fatigue test (TN 12).

Hazard Suggestions

Westfold is a mostly settled area, but travel in early spring is not without risks.

All Roads the Same (Guide – Weariness)
The blanketing snow and the similarity of the vales opening along the White Mountains forces the guide to retrace his steps many times, taxing them greatly. On a failed Travel test, the Guide is temporarily made Weary for the rest of the journey.

Blinding Blizzard (All Companions – Strain)
A sudden late blizzard sweeps down off the White Mountains, taking all of the heroes by surprise. With so little shelter on the open plains before the foothills, they are all forced to endure and press on for a time through the cruel driving snow. All the companions must make another Travel roll – if they fail they lose an amount of Endurance equal to the roll of a success die.

Rest can be found at any of the small steadings within a short canter of the road. The companions are likely to hear more of the rumours from Edoras if they partake of the hospitality easily-won by showing the King's coin. The main concerns in this part of Rohan are wolves, wild bands of Dunlendings, and how well the herds have wintered. To player-heroes who are themselves from the Mark, the near endless talk on the matter of horses will seem entirely normal.

To outsiders it will seem to be an unfathomable, wearying obsession. The Rohirrim seem to care about their horses above all else. The idea that wild Dunlendings may have been stealing and eating horses is absolutely abhorrent to them, and any Rider the company meet will urge the stiffest of justice to be meted out in revenge.

The First Steading

Early one crisp, clear morning, the company arrive at the first steading marked on their bone map. Without indications from the Reeve, and being completely

deserted, this settlement is sadly nameless. It is set up on a hill, partly surrounded by wind-blown trees. Snow lies heavy on the ground. Everything is eerily quiet, the chill bites hard, and the wind starts up a low moaning as the company draw closer. This place has an unnerving, spooky feel - what should be a bustling farmstead stands still in a silent landscape drained of colour.

Refer to the map on page 12 as the company explore.

Map locations

Boundary Rocks
Boulders traditionally mark the borders of a steading where no fence and ditch is built. This steading has no defences, and the boundary boulders can be seen under their hats of snow.

The Main Longhouse
Most steadings in Rohan are centred around a longhouse. These wooden, rectangular buildings with thatched roofs provide a home for the homesteaders, as well as their beloved horses, who sleep in stables well cared for, below a sleeping platform at one end of the building. A central hearth provides warmth and a place to cook. Smoke leaves through a hole in the centre of the roof, as well as through the thatch itself.

This particular longhouse has suffered terrible damage. From a distance it's clear there is no smoke coming from the smoke hole, and indeed the roof itself is slumped in at one end. Drawing closer, the company can see the end wall has collapsed outwards, its ancient grey timbers strewn all around. It appears as if something pulled it out of the building – perhaps using a team of horses? A thorough search of the area requires a **Hunting** or **Search** roll at TN 16, as snow has since fallen, and there is a light covering over all the hard ground. On a successful roll the companions find a thick iron ring, one of those that riders use to tie their horses to the wall: it has been wrested out of its socket with great force, and it's broken and twisted.

Peering inside, the traditional sleeping platform has fallen down onto the stables. There is nothing unusual to be found here, though a thorough search through the snow may take an hour or more.

There are no horses or people here, and no signs of a struggle beyond the collapsed building.

Outbuildings
They contain tools and farming implements - hoes, shovels, rakes, pitchforks, as well as fodder for the horses (hay), and bedding (straw). Many steadings have a smoke house for preserving meat caught on the plains - largely rabbit and venison. Currently at the end of a long winter food supplies are short.

Trees
The trees surrounding the buildings provide a good vantage point on which to spy on the steading.

Stream
Down at the stream the companions may find a wooden bucket laid on its side. Perhaps left in haste.

The general mood here is one of silent isolation. Nothing living moves, or makes a sound. The low moaning of the wind is all that can be heard.

The Second Steading

There is still time before nightfall to head to the next steading marked on the next section of the bone map. A half hour's ride, and another isolated steading is visible on a lonely rise ahead. In contrast to the empty and eerie silence of the previous farm, events begin to accelerate.

Again the longhouse has been partially demolished. This time there is less snow on the ruined building and its timbers have only a light scattering of ice. As the companions approach, figures can be seen lying on the ground. The first one they come across is a woman, who appears to have died from a grievous blow to the head. Drawing closer, a second body reveals itself to be a boy of perhaps fourteen winters, clutching a broken spear-shaft in his cold hands. He doesn't seem ready for battle, wearing a night shift.

At this point a moaning sound is heard. Resting against a broken roof beam is a Man of the Mark who yet lives, also dressed for sleeping. His blood-soaked hands grip his belly, and there is red at his lips. A broken sword lies beside him in the snow, black blood on its snapped blade.

The Farmstead
0 10 20 30 40 ft

As the companions move toward him, they spy great tracks in the trampled snow around the man - huge footprints, splashes of blood, both red and black, and deep ruts through the snow and earth, as if something heavy was dragged away from the collapsed longhouse.

The wounded man speaks in a rasping voice. He is clearly in his final moments.

"It came from the Grimgelad! The cursed gully! It came in the night. Silvermane and Hardhoof. Hardhoof... he fought so hard, but who could stand against such a beast? Six steadings, their horses devoured! I have failed them... I failed my kin, I could not protect mount nor hearth, what use am I? I will meet my ancestors in shame." His eyes roll up to the sky, and a pair of crows clatter noisily from a nearby tree.

The man groans again and utters through gritted and bloodied teeth *"A great wild-eyed beast from the mountain! An evil thing with a skin hard as iron 'neath it's coat! Find it in the Grimgelad whence it has returned and kill it, make revenge where I have failed!"*. And then he is gone.

Digging graves in the cold earth is hard work. There are no more bodies to be found, and this steading to all intents and purposes is much like the last.

Great tracks lead away through the snow toward the jagged slopes of the White Mountains where the company must go...

- Part Three - Stepping into Darkness

The tracks lead the company up through the rising terrain into the gullies breaking the foothills of the White Mountains. Jagged rocks and sliding shale cover the hillsides under the partially melted snow. It's slow going and dangerous, and the company have to dismount and lead their horses on foot.

While they will have no idea what they are looking for, beyond following the beast's tracks, they know it when they see it. Between two huge, basalt-black boulders, which bear faint traces of ancient carvings, yawns the entrance to the Grimgelad. The tracks lead directly into it.

The Cursed Gully

The *Grimgelad* bears a very old name indeed. Heroes with the *Old Lore* trait and familiar with the tongue of the Mark could hazard a translation as the "fierce pass" or perhaps the "dark way". Companions from Rohan may have heard childhood tales of places in the White Mountains just like this, from whence come Goblins and Trolls and other terrifying eaters of horseflesh.

Twisted, ancient trees grow at strange angles from the splintered rock, crossing back and forth across the gaping gully. It resembles an uneven tunnel, thirty or forty feet across, with the crossing evergreens serving as a roof of sorts. It appears to head straight into the mountain. Bones can be seen scattered about the gully-mouth, some quite fresh looking, and there are splashes of red on the snow.

An ill wind wails from the entrance. A companion succeeding at an **Insight** roll catches the sound of a whisper, while a superior level of success means they hear the voice of an old man, melodious to the ear, but chanting dark imprecations to murder. The sound of the voice goes as quickly as it came, and the wind returns to its eerie wailing.

A short way from the mouth of the Grimgelad the companions find a small campsite, showing evidence of a party of five or six having been here within the last few days. Heroes with knowledge of such things will guess that these were Dunlendings due to their lack of boot prints. Dunlending hunters wear footgear made of leather strips and linen in winter, frequently going barefoot during other seasons. There is no way to tell exactly where the Dunlending party came from.

The Hunters Hunted

And so it is that the company learn that there is a hunting party of Dunlendings in Westfold, but they had no part in the brutal killings of the farmers. Indeed, they seek

the creature who has committed the massacres, for it has done far worse in the Dunlending West-march. They have spotted the company wending their way up towards the mouth of the gully, and are waiting to learn the company's intentions.

Companions succeeding at an **Awareness** roll have the distinct feeling of being watched. A great or extraordinary success spots one or more figures hidden in the darkness and twisted tree roots of the Grimgelad mouth. If the heroes do not spot anyone, the first the company learn of the Dunlending hunters is the arrows that thud into the ground at their feet. A deep and sonorous voice rings out, in a Dunland accent "We wish to speak with you, straw-heads. We mean you no harm, but harm may soon befall us all. Let us parley."

At this point it is worth remembering that the company have been largely set up to believe the Dunlendings are bad, eat horses, and are the villains of the piece. However, the companions also know that it is a great monster that they are searching for. Perhaps a monster connected to the Dunlendings, but there's no direct link to them as yet. Recognising the threat of the common enemy, and realising that they have much in common with the Dunlendings is the path of true heroes at this juncture.

Should the player-heroes attack the Dunlendings, use the Dunlending Raiders stats presented on page 118 of *Horse-lords of Rohan*.

An Unlikely Meeting

If the companions agree to talk to the Dunlendings, three of them come in the open. One, their leader, goes by the name of Imhar Far-Reach, a grizzled, hardy man with sharp grey eyes and a trim silver beard. Unlike the majority of his folk, he wears his hair short. He carries a bow, a worthy weapon, elaborately carved with images of beasts.

Set Tolerance

Both Imhar and the members of the company are seeking answers, but despite needing knowledge, it is Valour that the Dunlendings value. The initial Tolerance is equal to the highest Valour among the company, increased by 2 to reflect Imhar's intentions. If the company's spokesperson is a Rider of Rohan, decrease the Tolerance by 1. If by strange chance a Dunlending hero accompanies the company, increase the Tolerance by their Standing.

Introductions

A successful **Lore** roll will tell a hero that conventional courtesy won't work when dealing with the Dunlendings, as they generally prefer deeds to words. **Awe** invoking tales of the company's feats is far more likely to impress them. **Riddle** is unlikely to set the proper tone, but depending on the company's disposition and past interactions with Dunlendings, they may wish to conceal who they are and avoid plain speech.

Interaction

Depending on the circumstances, Imhar Far-Reach may introduce himself before the characters do; otherwise, he will do so immediately after they finish. He says little of himself other than that he is a hunter and the other Dunlendings present have chosen to follow him.

Characters with an appropriate background have a good chance of having heard of Imhar as a renowned hunter.

Though they may manage to ask with some grace, the company will doubtless demand to know what the Dunlendings are doing in the Riddermark, likely before they are willing to reveal much more of themselves than who they are. Imhar expects this; after all, he and his followers are not in their own lands. He is also canny and wise, and quite unlike the impetuous Rohirrim.

Here are some likely questions the company may have and Imhar's responses:

What are you doing in the Riddermark?
"We hunt a creature that has slain many of our people. What little tracks it has left led us here."

What sort of 'creature'?
"A terrible one. It hunts by night, when the moon is covered, so I cannot say for certain what it is, but it is a great beast, hungering for the flesh of our beasts."

How do you intend to deal with it?
"We will find where it lays down to sleep, and kill it. With fire."

What do you know of the cursed valley?
"Nothing. But the wind carries evil voices, and dark dreams. It is a blighted place."

Do you eat horses?
"I prefer lamb or goat."

Imhar has little else to relate, other than they have hunted the creature for well over a month. All those who follow him have lost loved ones to the creature's ravages. **Insight** rolls indicate that he is telling the truth.

After sharing what he knows, the Far-Reach asks why a company such as the heroes are out here in this chill spring weather? If the company chooses to be honest and reveals the deaths of the farmers, all of the Dunlendings are clearly sympathetic, many shaking their heads sadly as all-too-familiar details are revealed.

If the company chooses to lie to Imhar and the Dunlendings about the killings in Westfold, it is a Misdeed automatically causing each hero that puts forward or supports such a lie to gain 2 Shadow points. While the Far-Reach will not probe to deeply, he will suspect he is being lied to and will be deeply cautious of the company.

When the conversation draws to a natural conclusion – or if the Tolerance is exceeded – the company and the Dunlendings will have to decide what comes next. The outcome of the encounter indicates what Imhar is willing to offer to the characters, adjusted for what they have told him of themselves and their quest. If all parties have been honest, it is fairly clear that they are all hunting the same foe.

0-1: Imhar is either unimpressed by the company, or deeply suspicious of them. He decides he cannot trust them enough to share his mission, and will seek to slay the beast without relying on their help. He won't resist travelling in their company to find the creature, but he will not offer any help to them.

2-4: Imhar believes there is worthiness in the player-heroes and honour enough at least to trust them. He offers his assistance in tracking the creature. The other Dunlendings will remain stand-offish with the company.

5-6: Imhar and his folk are genuinely impressed by the company. The Far-Reach offers to track the creature and states that if the heroes will it, they will all stand together against it. The Dunlendings are friendly on the road to any heroes that have not directly insulted them.

7+: In addition to the previous entry, should Imhar Far-Reach survive the events of the adventure, he offers to travel to Meduseld to speak with Thengel King regarding all that occurred. All members of the company gain an additional Experience point during the Epilogue.

Once the encounter is over, the sun is on the wane, and it is high time to enter the Grimgelad, and confront the beast. Be that the Snow-Troll who has attacked the steadings, or something darker in the hearts of men...

- Part Four -
The Horse-eater

Whether working together as one band, or eyeing one another with suspicion, the company and the Dunlending hunters head into the daunting gully.

Into the Grimgelad

The dimming light of late afternoon is almost entirely extinguished once the company pass into the blighted Grimgelad. There is a sense here of deep and ancient malignancy, the air is thick with a smell of musty pine sap and sour-sweating stones. All companions must pass a Corruption test, or gain one point of Shadow.

No snow reaches the bottom of the gully, but the floor is thickly carpeted with pine needles. Strewn throughout these are yet more bones. Some are so old that they crumble at a touch. Others so fresh they still show traces of fat and marrow. But also great tooth marks and the scraping of great claws.

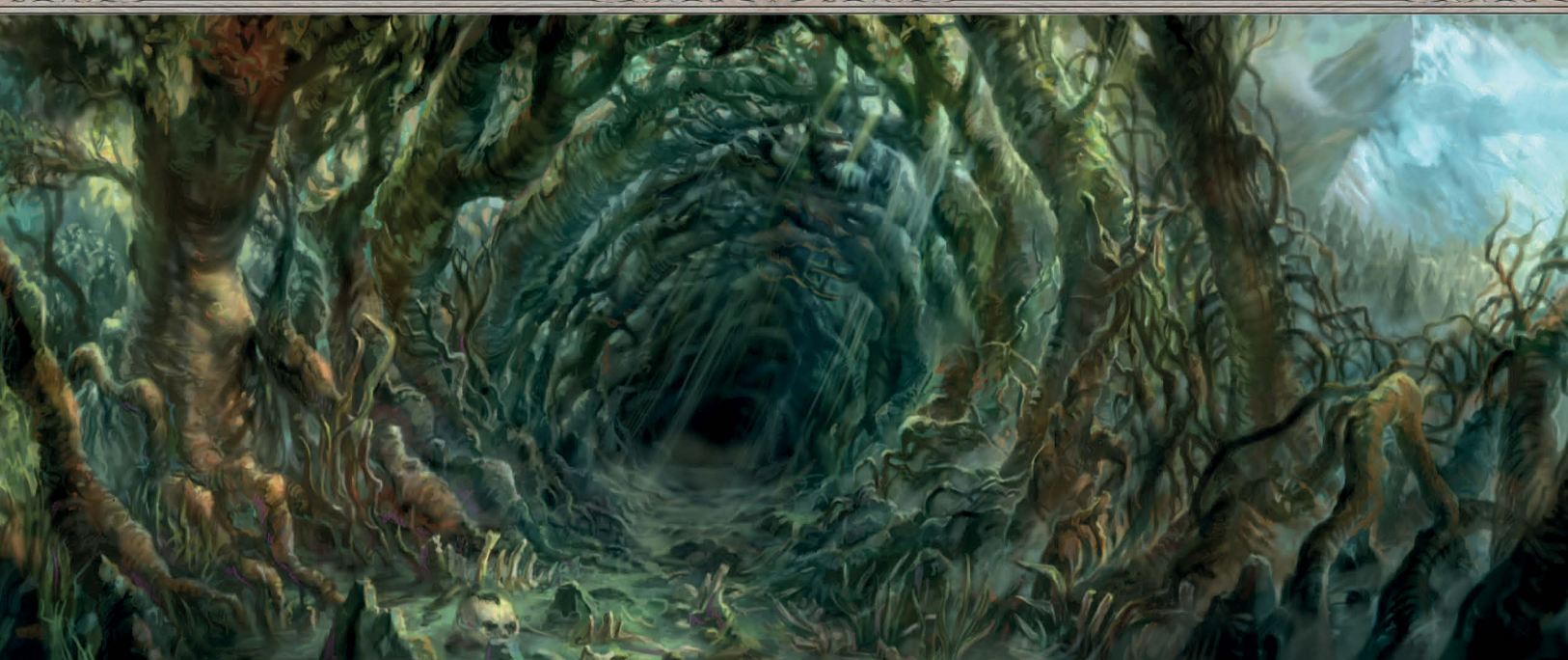
A deep trough has been dragged through the thick carpet of pine needles, showing the way forward through the increasingly oppressive gloom. The wind howls and whispers ever louder the further the companions press on. After heading steadily downward toward the roots of the mountain, the gully begins to twist. Light begins to make its presence known again as the trees overhead become a tangle of mean boughs.

The Horse-eater's Hollow

Eventually, the passageway the companions are following opens out into a wider, almost circular opening, surrounded by jagged cliffs that cast unsettling shadows across the scene. The darkening sky is visible overhead, and grey clouds, ripe with snow glower down into this natural theatre. More bones can be seen strewn amongst the rocks here, and in the centre there is the red-stained carcass of a chestnut horse. Squatting over it is a huge, snow-white Troll, its head buried inside the rib cage of the slain animal.

Above the sounds of what must be its terrible jaws tearing meat, the wind has reached a high pitched whine. Everyone now hears the voice of the Grimgelad, speaking hideous words on the wind, cursing. The voice drips with honey, and yet arouses murderous passions, threatening and cajoling.

The Horse-eater is a Snow-Troll of prodigious size with a blunt snout, stained red with blood. It looks up from its feasting. Tiny, blue-rimmed eyes spark a glowing red gold in the gloom. The creature sniffs the air with a deep growl, then stands still, its misshapen head tilted, as if listening to the voice in the wind.



The Horse-eater (Greater Snow-Troll):

Attribute Level	
8	
Endurance	Hate
96	9
Parry	Armour
6	3d
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 2
Movement, 3	Custom, 0
Perception, 2	Vocation, 0
Weapon Skills	
Crush	3
Bite	4
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
Great Seize	Strike Fear
Seize Victim	Wicked Cunning*
Horrible Strength	-

*The voice of the Grimgelad whispers to the Troll, giving it advice when the creature is threatened. The Troll can spend 1 point of Hate at the start of a round: when attacked, the Troll gains a bonus to its Parry rating equal to the basic TN of the attacking hero's Combat stance.

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	5	10	16	-
Crush	8	👁	14	-

Ulfúr is Back

Shaken by the Troll's appearance and strange behaviour, the Dunlendings and the companions prepare for the fight. Suddenly there is a scornful laugh from behind the company. Ulfúr has arrived.

"Well done comrades! You have tracked the Dunlending beasts to their lair. And barely a step ahead of me! You must be very proud to have beaten Ulfúr to his prize. But join us now, and let us slay these dirty haired savages and their monster together! Revenge for the Eorlings!"

He and his men draw their swords, and Ulfúr spits towards Imhar with a hiss. He clearly intends to slaughter the Dunlendings, along with the monster. The Troll is crouching amongst the bones, eyeing the intruders but continuing to remain still. The wind howls louder, and the company must decide!

As heroes, the companions have little choice. Even the most prejudiced Man of the Mark will be unhappy at Ulfúr's rash judgement. Will the companions be steadfast enough to refuse to side with him, or will they get ready to attack the Dunlendings? But the heroes haven't much time to consider their quandary, as something unexpected happens. When Ulfúr made his appearance the wind was slowly dropping, until the wind is entirely silent. Without any warning, the Troll lunges forward with surprising quickness and seizes Ulfúr! It delivers him a terrible bite across the neck and shoulders, the great jagged maw clamping fast and tearing away his life. Then, the creature turns back, running towards the far side of the hollow still holding its prey, and disappears into a shadowed cave opening.

Dismayed, Ulfúr's men lower their weapons, their lust for battle completely snuffed out by the gruesome end of their

leader. Eyeing the beweaponed Dunlendings, they hastily retreat and leave the Grimgelad in shame. Imhar and the Dunlendings turn to the companions, waiting for their decisions.

How to Kill a Snow-Troll

The companions came to kill the monster, and now have their chance, because the cave opening leads to a small underground chamber, and the monster is lurking there (as grim sounds of gnawing testify). They can face it alone, or they can ask the Dunlendings and the Riders for help. After the Snow-Troll's display of ferocity, only Imhar and another Dunlending warrior will volunteer for the task, but only after at least one successful roll of **Inspire**.

Then, it is up to the players to concoct a plan to better face the challenge of the Horse-eater. If they enter the chamber where the creature hid into, everyone will be considered to be *moderately hindered* both in attack and defence (TN +2 and 2, respectively).

If they try to smoke the monster out, for example, they will succeed, and the Troll will rush out to attack them, and they will fight in the open without being hindered.

When battle is finally joined, the Loremaster can represent the assistance of the Dunlendings and Riders using the stats for Dunlending Raiders (page 118 of *Horse-lords of Rohan*), making their **Axe** skill favoured, and adding 1 to the **Spear** rank.

If the Snow-Troll is slain, the companions are free to search the lair of the Horse-eater: the chamber where the monster hid is a round artificial grotto, its walls carved with figures and signs made too dim to read by the passing of centuries. Among many dried bones, and not far from the mangled body of Ulfúr, they find a small chest and a large two-handled cup.

Both containers are filled with coins and jewels - a treasure hoard collected by the monster from its victims maybe, or the treasures of those who once dwelt in the Grimgelad before the creature (see *The Hoard*, bellow).

- Epilogue -

When the dust settles, the companions will likely find themselves weary or even wounded, if not with a few bodies to bury. In any case, hurrying away from the evil Grimgelad as night falls seems like a good idea. Certainly Imhar will be keen to depart and return to his people. Based on how the adventure went and the behaviour of the heroes towards the Dunlendings, the Far-Reach may become a useful ally to return in future adventures, especially if the companions think about rewarding him. Likewise, one or more of Ulfúr's men may show up at a later date in search of revenge, especially if no weregild was paid. (See *The Hoard* below).

The trip back to Edoras is uneventful, and spring seems to finally be reaching the Mark in earnest. Green shoots show in abundance, and small yellow flowers seem to be opening all across the thawing plains to welcome the pale Spring sun.

The Hoard

The Snow-Troll's hoard is worth 250** Treasure. Being the monster-slayers, the heroes may feel they should be free to dispose of the treasure as they will, but letting the Reeve take this decision is a better idea: keeping gold from the King is a crime, punishable by exile.

If the heroes return to Edoras and bring the gold to the Reeve, he will hear their story and dispose of the hoard as follows:

- The companions are allowed to keep the best part of the hoard, as their fair reward (30 Treasure each, or an item if the hero found something special in the Hoard).
- Only if the companions recommend it, the Reeve will reserve a share for Imhar and his men, for their part in the monster-slaying (20 Treasure);
- Again, only if the heroes suggest it, a share will be set apart as weregild to be paid to the family of Ulfúr (30 Treasure).
- The remaining share will be sent to the treasuries of the King.

Finally, the Reeve promises that he will pass word of their good deeds, and good judgement to Thengel King.

- Red Days Rising -

- **When:** This quest is set during the spring of the year 2960, but could be set any year early in the reign of Thengel King.

- **Where:** The adventure begins in Edoras, where the company has a conversation with the King. It takes them to the Eastemnet camp of the Third Marshal and to the West-march to see the Second Marshal.

- **What:** The household of the Second Marshal and that of the Third Marshal of Rohan stand nearly at war. The companions are sent by the King to advocate a union that might finally set to right old grievances and rivalries.

- **Why:** Thengel King asks the company to help him intercede with his feuding marshals to ease their enmity. The King is a dauntless captain, but he prefers not to bring his marshals to heel by command if he can instead lead them to wisdom.

- **Who:** The rival marshals are Cenric, Third Marshal of the Riddermark, who is lord of Eastfold; and Éogar, Second Marshal of the Riddermark and lord of Westfold, as well as many of their followers and kin. The bride and groom proposed to end the feud are Esmund, cousin of the Third Marshal, and Mildryd Shielding, captain of the Second Marshal's personal *éored*.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into five parts, which begin at Edoras and end at the Entwade. The company must include one or more Riders of Rohan.

Part One - Wisdom of the Riders

The company, as guests at the table of Thengel King, discuss the virtues of a worthy Eorling. It is revealed that the highest marshals of Rohan stand nearly at war. Queen Morwen has seen a chance to end their feud honourably – without the King having to shame his proud marshals with a stern rebuke – with a wedding. The companions could serve Rohan well by persuading the quarrelsome marshals to accept peace and unite their peoples.

Part Two - Flytes at the Ford

Riding to the Eastemnet to consult with Cenric, Third Marshal of Rohan, the company finds rivals from the feuding households bickering at the Entwade and ready to come to blows in a duel. The companions have a chance to prevent any killing if they wish to risk intervening...

Part Three - Where the Sky-Spear Falls

Deep in the Eastemnet the companions meet with Cenric and Esmund. But unusual trouble and a sudden storm may mean disaster for Cenric's cattle-herd. Helping to save the herd could prove deadly, but success may make Cenric more willing to heed the companions.

Part Four - The River-reavers

The company crosses the Westemnet to the Gap of Rohan seeking Éogar, Second Marshal of Rohan, and Mildryd Shielding, one of his captains. They find Éogar in a crisis, pursuing Dunlending raiders who abducted his wife Esfled. Helping to rescue Esfled will surely make Éogar listen to a proposal of peace.

Part Five - A Blood-Red Evening

The companions, if successful in their quest, bring Mildryd Shielding and Esmund of Eastfold together at the Entwade. Spilt blood has a hold of its own though, and not all among the Rohirrim wish for peace...

- Part One -
Wisdom of the Riders

Théoden, son of Thengel, was born in Gondor and spent his first five years there. His mother the Queen is a noble woman of Lossarnach, and his father loved that land and its people. As a consequence, the household of Edoras speaks Sindarin and Westron, along with the tongue of Rohan. To the Rohirrim all of their speech carries strange accents, reminiscent of Elves and the Sea. Thengel therefore sometimes summons Théoden and his sisters to the great hall of Meduseld, so that they may learn the ways of the land they now call their home. They attend to meetings of great lords and gatherings of the common

people alike. The King rarely allows his children to speak at these meetings – they generally deal with matters more important than a child's education – but requires them always to listen, and eventually to ask questions of Thengel, Morwen, and their counsellors afterwards.

Thus this spring afternoon, when the King and Queen honour the player-heroes by seeing them in the Golden Hall to tell tales and discuss the ways of the Eorlingas, Théoden is also present.

Midday in Edoras

What exactly brought the player-heroes to Thengel's table is up to the Loremaster and the players. If this is to be the companions' first adventure, the Loremaster should invite the players to narrate an event that impressed or helped the King when he rode near their family's territory recently (if they all hail from Rohan). If the players are stumped for a story, then the Loremaster may offer that the King and his retinue were delayed while travelling in the winter and the player-heroes offered them shelter for a night.

Meeting the King

It is not unusual for common Eorlingas to sit at table with the King in Meduseld; Thengel ofttimes has a midday meal with his folk, great or small. But it is a rare honour for the player-heroes, and it is still a recent development for anyone in Edoras to call it normal. For 50 years the former King, Fengel, made his every appearance an opportunity for great lords and merchants to gain position and influence by flattering him and bringing rich gifts, so much so that some in Edoras whispered that the "Golden Hall" had a meaning more than just its brightly-coloured roof..

Today at the table are Thengel King, his dark hair streaked with grey but hale and Queen Morwen Steelsheen, tall and black-haired and regal. Young Prince Théoden, thoughtful and patient for his age, sits beside the player-heroes (Théoden's sisters are away with cousins in Aldburg.)

Sunnifa, the lovely, golden-haired serving-woman to the Queen, serves the dishes: beef from the King's own herd; pork from a wild boar hunted in the Everholt; a stew of carrots, cabbage, peas and leeks spiced with herbs; bread in small loaves; berries, apples, and almond cake; red wine from Gondor; and mead and beer brewed in the Westfold Vale.

Heáfod, the old captain of the King's Guard, and other Riders of the King's *éored* lurk in alcoves just out of sight. (Information on Edoras, the hall of Meduseld and the royal court is presented in *Horse-lords of Rohan* starting on page 13).

At the outset of the meal Morwen fills Thengel's cup with wine for him to take the first drink, and then brings the vessel to each guest to drink in turn. Thus all are welcomed and honoured, high and low alike. Morwen returns the cup to her husband and takes her own seat at the table.

How Old is Théoden?

In 2960, Théoden is twelve years old. If this adventure is set much later, perhaps it is Théoden's little sister, Théodwyn, future wife of Éomund of Eastfold and mother of Éomer and Éowyn, who is invited to propose a topic of discussion instead.

Encounter Goal

This meeting is not a typical encounter. The adventure presumes that the player-heroes met the King before and therefore need no introduction. Furthermore, the player-heroes aren't necessarily out to persuade Thengel or Morwen of anything. They hope only to make a good impression on the King and Queen, which may lead to an increase in a new company's influence and prominence.

Thengel, on the other hand, has singled the player-heroes out for a purpose. He does not broach it until the end, but he needs the aid of a few trusty men, ones not tied to either the Second Marshal or to the Third Marshal, nor yet acknowledged members of the King's own household. He needs errand-riders who can carry messages between the two lords, heroes who can be trusted to put the King's and the kingdom's interests ahead of anything else. The King listens to his guests' speech closely, gauging which of them seems the wisest...

Set Tolerance

The initial Tolerance for the encounter is equal to the highest Wisdom in the company. Increase the Tolerance by 1 if one or more companions addressed the court

Worthy Qualities

The following list offers a number of 'virtues' that may be considered valuable in the court of Thengel King, along with short commentaries from the King and the Queen of the Mark themselves – generally, Thengel advocates the merits of a quality, while Morwen offers a warning. Loremasters may use this information as they see fit.

Boldness

"The bravery of our ancestors has earned us a great kingdom. Being bold is the fastest way to gain renown, but also the most dangerous. " - Thengel
"Courage is a shield against our enemies. But one should look carefully before entering any doorway." - Morwen

Pride

"Our ancient songs demonstrate that what we do in life outlasts us. Pride will make sure of that, for better or worse." - Thengel
"As pride waxes, wisdom often wanes." - Morwen

Generosity

"Generosity proves loyalty and earns friendship. A greedy man is good to none and worst to himself." - Thengel
"No friend is he who flatters with words too kind or gifts too rich." - Morwen

Loyalty

"Loyalty binds us together. It holds you to your oaths and keeps you standing by your kin." - Thengel
"Do not swear loyalty too freely. No one can be the friend of everyone." - Morwen

Wisdom

"A wise heart sees which course to take when the path is unclear." - Morwen
"Even the wisest of us can be overtaken by a fool. In doubt, trust to truth and bravery." - Thengel

Truthfulness

"If you doubt a man's words, you doubt everything about him. Nothing is as vile as a fickle tongue." - Morwen
"Truth is a treasure that is easily tainted. If a word is not yours to tell, it is better not to speak at all." - Thengel

speaking in Sindarin, and by another 1 to reflect the goodwill of the Lord of the Mark towards the companions.

Interaction

Early on in the course of the meal, Thengel announces that he wishes to ask something of his son.

"Rarely our table sees such a gathering of warriors bonded by the same adventurous spirit, or who have seen so much of the world. Théoden, my son, is there a question you would like to ask our guests?"

The young prince of the Riddermark thinks a moment, and then says he wishes to discuss the qualities of a man of worth. Which virtue is most desirable? Morwen chides Théoden gently, saying that guests in a house might rightly fear to instruct the Lord of the Mark on virtue, but Thengel bids everyone at the table to speak freely.

"No one is ever too wise to learn new wisdom, neither child nor king. Speak, friends, what hold you to be the greatest virtue in a man? Is it bravery maybe, or wisdom? Generosity, or truthfulness?"

The King listens, plainly weighing the words of his guests. He is not looking for a specific answer, but he is interested in how the player-heroes will explain their choices. The players are free to advocate their position, proposing a quality of their own, possibly selecting one virtue they feel they themselves display, at least to a measure, based on which Distinctive Features they possess for example (see also the Worthy Qualities box on the previous page).

When the players have chosen the quality to propose they all must make a skill roll to convey their wisdom (**Awe, Courtesy, Insight, Inspire, Persuade, Riddle** or **Song** are all legitimate choices). Since the companions are debating between themselves which virtue should be held greatest, the roll is an opposed one: the companion who obtains the best result is considered to have proved his position better than the others (see *Opposed Actions*, *The One Ring Roleplaying Game* page 148).

The Worries of the King

When the discussion is over, Thengel acknowledges the superior wisdom of the winner of the debate and treats that hero as the company's leader from that moment on.

Then, the Lord of the Mark turns to Théoden and asks which he thinks is the greatest virtue. The young boy answers:

"My mother taught me that truthfulness stands above as the king of all virtues, as truth protects all the other qualities of a man of worth. And yet I have learnt from you, my father, that it is loyalty that binds Rider to King, King to retainer. Without loyalty there would be no Eorlingas, nor the other virtues that make them great."

Thengel grows thoughtful at Théoden's talk of loyalty. He stares pensively at the burning hearth for a few long moments, then he raises his eyes to look first at his son, then to the companions sitting next to the young lord.

"This is well said, my son. Yet, while I do not doubt the steadfastness of the people of Rohan, at times pride takes over and clouds the mind of those whose position would require them to stand as an example instead."

Thengel continues his speech explaining to his guests how a bitter feud among his right-hand men, the Second Marshal and the Third Marshal of the Mark, is worrying him. The rivalry between Cenric of Eastfold and Éogar of Westfold began at the time of Fengel King and has only deepened since Thengel took the throne. Each marshal despises the other, and their loyal kinsmen carry their struggle far and wide.

Individuals from each faction watch their rivals constantly and sometimes chase each other down. Insults fly at the Entwade crossings and at feast-day gatherings, and there has been bloodshed more than once when taunts went too far. Over the years, weregilds in gold have been paid to make amends, but others have fled as outlaws. This has gone far enough, says Thengel.

There might come a day when the Lord of the Mark must tame his marshals by force. But he would rather lead them to peace by wisdom. Éogar and Cenric are mighty men, stern and powerful. The Riddermark needs their strength, uncowed and unbroken.

And Queen Morwen has observed that they may still have a chance at peace with honour...

Who's Who

Éogar of Westfold, lord of the Hornburg, is the Second Marshal of the Riddermark. He has led the Riders of his household for many years defending against Dunlending raids and launching countless sorties against them. Yet his greatest foe seems to be Cenric of Eastfold, his fellow marshal. Cenric, Third Marshal of the Riddermark, has led the Riders of Eastfold for many years, defending the Eastemnet plains and the crossings of the Undeeps. He has also grown very rich over the years through the Riddermark's trade with Gondor. (Information on the two marshals is presented in *Horse-lords of Rohan*, pages 41 and 34, respectively).

Recent Events in the Feud of the Marshals

A few years ago, a nephew of Cenric's killed a cousin of Éogar in a fight over a woman. Éogar's family said it was murder. Cenric's family said the killer was attacked first and therefore refused to pay weregild. The nephew holed up in a village in the Folde, but the next year he was caught on the road by riders from Westfold and slain – and the woman who was the cause of the dispute married into Éogar's family after all. Compensation was offered for the death of his nephew, but Cenric refused, saying blood alone would suffice.

Tying a Knot

Prompted by the King, the Queen tells the player-heroes the tale of Mildryd Shielding of Westfold and Esmund, son of Edwin of Eastfold.

"Many years ago, Mildryd and Esmund, though not related by blood, grew as inseparable as brother and sister, as their families were united by a strong friendship. They remained close as they grew to adults, and many thought that brotherly love would soon give way to a different type of feeling."

"But they surprised everyone when Esmund married a lady from a prominent Eastfold family following his father Edwin's advice, and Mildryd married a rich Westfold retainer. Both seemed content with their choice, and would have probably continued to be so, had not fate devised different plans for both unions. Not long ago, Esmund's wife died bearing their first child, while Mildryd's husband and children were slain in a Dunlending raid several years back."

Queen Morwen pauses with furrowed brow, and looks to her husband. Thengel continues the tale.

"Today, Esmund is a brave captain despite his ill-luck and all the people of Eastfold love him. He is no friend to Cenric and would have cause to feud with the Third Marshal, but his loyalty instead has won his lord's respect. Mildryd went seeking peace on the battlefield, as she took up shield and spear after the death of her husband as a Shieldmaiden and soon became famous for her relentlessness. Now she is one of Éogar's chief lieutenants, the captain of his personal éored."

"You all see where this tale brings us: can the life-thread of these two be entwined, to heal their spirit and mend the rift that jealousy and spite has dug between the folks of Westfold and Eastfold?"

Thengel's Task

Thengel needs his marshals to make peace and to immediately settle whatever payments of weregilds and damages remain between them. But if he orders them directly to set their households' differences aside, it may embarrass them and their people.

Only a marriage between the two households might provide the proud marshals with the excuse for peace that mere goodwill has yet to find. That may allow them to end their feud without shame. As free Eorlingas, Mildryd and Esmund are entitled to make their own decisions. They know each other. They may be far easier to persuade than the lords they serve.

Thengel asks the company to act as his messengers. *Not* as his agents – they will not go with any authority! – but rather to carry proposals and to convey the King's desires. If the companions agree to help, Thengel thanks them,

saying this is a great service to the Mark. He promises rich reward if they bring swift peace between the marshals.

The Company Sets Out

Thengel informs the companions that they may look for Cenric in the Eastemnet, as he is visiting his herds and their guards; Esmund will be there too, patrolling the area with his men.

The King mentions the cunning of Gálmód, Cenric's foster-son and counsellor, as a warning to the companions.

Based on his latest information, Éogar should be found at the Fords of Isen, making plans for the spring and summer. Morwen suggests that when they speak with him, it may help to win the approval of Esfled, his wife.

The adventure now proceeds based on the players' choices. If the company rides first to the Gap of Rohan seeking Éogar, then *Part Four - The River-reavers* begins. If they go to the Eastemnet seeking Cenric, their first encounter will be at the Entwade in *Part Two - Flytes at the Ford*.

Should the companions decide to inquire a bit about the marshals in Edoras, Eastfold or Westfold, looking for clues to aid in their negotiations, the Loremaster may make use of the information offered in the relevant chapters of *Horse Lords of Rohan*.

- Part Two -
Flytes at the Ford

Spring in Rohan makes for fine weather to travel in, and the Plains of Rohan are easy terrain for a horse to ride swiftly across. If the company sets out from Edoras for the Eastemnet, they can follow a wide, well-packed road along the southern reach of the Westemnet, the vast green plains where countless herds of horses and cattle roam.

South of the road the land grows lower and wetter, thick with willows where the Snowbourn River runs to the Entwash. It's spring and the rivers and fens are swollen from the mountain thaws.

- The journey from Edoras to the Entwade is 80 miles and takes two days. The company need only make a single Fatigue test (TN 12).

If the company instead went looking for Éogar first (Part Four - *The River-reavers*), then they can either travel from the Fords of Isen directly across the Westemnet, or follow the Great West Road back through Westfold to Edoras and then follow the Snowbourn to the Entwade.

- If the company travel directly across the Westemnet, this is a journey of 190 miles, taking five days and a single Fatigue test (TN 14).

- If the company return to Edoras along the Great West Road, this leg of the journey is 110 miles. It only takes a day and a half due to the quality of the road, and a single Fatigue test (TN 12). The second leg is as described previously.

At the Crossings

At the Entwade, the companions discover that Riders are encamped on either side of the river. On the western shore are a score of Riders from Westfold. On the eastern shore are two dozen from Eastfold.

As the sun sets and the company approaches, the Riders have gathered close on either shore, listening and laughing. One from the west has ridden out a short way into the water, as has one from the east. The two rivals call out taunts and insults in song and stories: *flyting*, an ancient tradition in these parts.

Usually flyting is a peaceful contest. For a feast, the laughter and applause of the hall would tell the winner, who would win only renown and then share a cup with the loser. But in wartime, flyting often comes before a battle, as a fighter challenges the enemy and taunts one, perhaps a particular rival, to come forward and fight. And even in peacetime, some flytes go too far and lead to violence...

Heroes who wish to interfere with the flyting can attempt **Insight** rolls to gain bonus Success dice for the coming encounter (see page 151 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*). Any success confirms that from the way the rivals speak and carry themselves a duel is likely.

The player-heroes are here at Thengel's wish to make peace between the feuding households. They may wish to interrupt. But can they stop the fight without drawing anger on themselves by insulting the rivals?

If Mildryd rides with the player-heroes because they went to Éogar first (see page 24), she prefers to wait until the rivals finish their flyting, and their duel if it comes to that. Maerstan and Ashgar are free men, after all, and must be free to choose their dooms. She neither hinders nor aids any companions who choose to intervene.

If the company steps forth, call for an encounter to convince the rivals to leave the contest at mere insults.

Set Tolerance

The Riders of Rohan are impressed by Valour, so the base Tolerance rating is set equal to the highest value amongst the companions. Standing is added normally to this score (if applicable), but only if a single companion goes

Songs in the Sunset

Here is a sample of the flyting that the player-heroes hear as they approach. After every line the Riders on either side laugh and cheer, but as the company arrives it has taken a hard, dangerous edge.

Maerstan of Eastfold sings:

"With the strength of Swiftsun, I stride to the water.
I sing out of Evenbright, sword undefeated.
Evenbright shines now, eager and laughing!"

"I come from the east-plains, from Cenric's rich people.
I give gleaming treasures, gold rings if you earn them.
But scorn I bring Ashgar! Scars and quick death!"

Ashgar of Westfold answers:

"With the strong legs of Steelshanks, I strive for the crossings!
With the power of my spear-hand, I pierce your rich hauberk.
With laughter and song, your life-blood I spill."

"I stand with Éogar, sturdy and stern,
A warrior in battle, no weaver of words.
Yet mercy I bring now, if Maerstan but begs!"

It goes on like that, in song and in boastful story, as the other Riders' laughter becomes harder and more cruel. Bloodshed approaches.

forward to speak as a peacemaker. If the player-heroes go in as a group, this looks cowardly and angers the Riders on both sides: any applicable Standing rating is ignored and the starting Tolerance is reduced by one.

Introduction

By what right do the player-heroes interfere? That's what the rivals, Maerstan of Westfold and Ashgar of Eastfold, demand to know. **Courtesy** and **Riddle** are useless here, though few Eorlingas can resist a good tale and **Song** may work; **Awe** (TN 12) will best convince the Riders that the newcomers deserve to be heard.

Interaction

The aim of the company is to talk both rivals into backing down, while convincing their respective factions that the decision did not cause a stain to their honour.

The discussions on virtues that the companion had at court may prove useful in searching for a way to make peace between the flyting contestants: to slay a fellow Rider is folly when real enemies are not far away.

Has stubborn wilfulness replaced genuine pride? Generosity of spirit sometimes is a greater proof of courage than willingness to fight and die. Pride and boldness drive the rivals; what virtues outweigh those?

Calming down each rival may be set up as a prolonged action, requiring 4 successes for each quarrelling Rider. Cooperation is allowed. (See *Prolonged Actions*, *The One Ring* page 149). The players are free to propose which skills their characters will employ to achieve their goal, but several examples follow below. At each attempt the Riders watching from the shores cheer the player-heroes' successes and jeer at their failures.

- If the **Awe** roll in the Introduction succeeded, **Inspire** may move one of the Rider; perhaps by demonstrating that even a powerful warrior like the player-hero is willing to laugh rather than slay when no true enemies are about. If the **Awe** roll failed, **Inspire** is useless.

- **Persuade** might convince one of the Riders to back down, perhaps by proving that sometimes valour can be found in setting aside overweening pride.

- The player-heroes can launch flytes of their own using **Riddle**! Cheerfully taunting the rivals for their eagerness to fight and die over a triviality may make their friends laugh until they see reason.

- Finally, the Eorlingas sing many songs of many kinds of courage. Not all end in death. Using **Song** may soothe such savage tempers.

Flyte or Fight?

If the companions exceed the Tolerance rating for the encounter before they complete the prolonged actions, things immediately turn violent. The riders refuse to back down, each accusing the other of cowardice and both charge screaming. The rivals meet on horseback in the water of the ford.

As they collide, Ashgar's spear runs through Maerstan, whereas Maerstan's sword wounds Ashgar's leg; as their horses dance apart, Maerstan slides dead into the river. The rivals all withdraw to their respective camps, glaring.

If the company manages to quell the violence, compare the number of successful rolls the heroes obtained before Tolerance was exceeded with the entries below to denote how well they bring the flyting contest to a close.

1 (Narrow Success): The two warriors launch a few more pointed barbs, but no clear winner emerges. The two factions insist that the company must declare a winner. Both sides accept whatever they choose, but make note of which side the company favoured – their choice may be brought up to the company's detriment if they need to convince whatever faction they choose against of something later on.

2-4 (Success): The flyting ends with no hard feelings. Mearstan and Ashgar launch a few more taunts but they are more good-natured. Maerstan's are funnier and win the loudest cheers, so eventually Ashgar accepts defeat; Ashgar promises Maerstan a full draught of ale as long as he lets Ashgar drink first. The two rivals return to their camps in peace. Both factions welcome the player-heroes for the night, to hear the latest news; however, both sides take note of who the companions choose to make camp with...

5+ (Great Success): As the previous entry, only both factions will tentatively send a few warriors across to hear the company's news together with their erstwhile rivals and none begrudge where the player-heroes choose to make camp.

Restraining the Riders

What if the companions wish to restrain Maerstan or Ashgar (or both) by force, invoking the name of the King? That might be the worst idea of all, as Thengel King granted the company no such authority to act in his name, only to carry his messages: such a choice constitutes a misdeed by itself, gaining each companion taking part in the scene at least 1 Shadow point, if not more (see page 224 of *The One Ring* for guidance).

If the companions resort to violence and harm one or both rivals, their actions constitute an even more grievous offence, a misdeed worth at least 4 Shadow points, maybe more if someone is killed; the offending companion may mitigate the Shadow gain by opting immediately to comply to the laws of the Mark, offering to pay the due weregild as reparation to the Rider's family (halve the Shadow gain). Weregild for a slain Rider equals to 30 points of Treasure.

Use the following stats for the any of the rivals if necessary:

Attribute Level:	5
Specialities:	Horsemanship
Distincitve Features:	Energetic, Vengeful
Relevant Skills:	Athletics ♦♦♦, Spear ♦♦, Sword ♦♦♦
Endurance:	18

Beyond the Entwade

Whatever course the encounter at the fords takes, the Riders from Westfold leave camp the morning after to go into the Westemnet, while the Riders from Eastfold leave immediately after the confrontation, to cross the Eastemnet and join their men patrolling the Undeeps.

Companions pressing on beyond the Entwade looking for Cenric find a trail leading into the southern plains of the Eastemnet, where the herds of the marshal roam.

- Part Three -
Where the Sky-Spear Falls

The company rides deep into the Eastemnet to find Cenric, Third Marshal of the Riddermark, and Esmund, son of Edwin. It will take at least a day of riding and searching to find Cenric's camp, possibly more.

Soon the river Entwash is out of sight behind them and there is nothing to see but tall grass from horizon to horizon. From time to time the company passes horse-herds and their herders. The herds are kept miles apart so they don't overburden the grasses or disturb each other. The herders bear bows for hunting small game, not the mail and shields of warriors. They greet the companions courteously and point the way southward.

The company passes a few cow-herds as well. Some families keep too many cattle for the small pastures of their Eastfold farms and so they roam parts of the plains. Cenric's cattle-herd is the largest and ranges far into the Eastemnet, a product of years of prosperous trading and husbandry.

The Wandering Minstrel

Midway through the day, the company crosses paths with an old herdsman riding a crabby old gelding apart from any herd, heading north. A young girl sits before him, holding the reins. They watch the companions approach with curiosity. When they are at calling distance, the girl speaks up on the old man's behalf.

"Hail, strangers. You cross paths with Léothere Five-Fingers, minstrel of Meduseld, singer of forgotten songs and keeper of ancient ways!"

The old man wears a wry smile and waits for the companions' introductions.

It is possible for a companion from the Mark to recognise the name. Léothere was a famous minstrel in the early years of Fengel's reign, but his songs were too pointed for the King and he found himself unwelcome. Indeed,

he found himself unwelcome in every hall where once he sang. He left the courts and left his minstrel days behind, fleeing Fengel's fury. The companions may also learn that much talking with Léothere and his little spokeswoman.

The girl's name is Bída Softsong, apprentice to Léothere. She says proudly that someday she will sing in the Golden Hall as her master once did. At that Léothere hurriedly hushes her and lets the companions speak. While Bída clearly adores her master, she regularly teases him as well. If the companions want nothing of Léothere and Bída, they trade a few passing bits of news and are on their way. They say that Cenric's camp lies another 20 miles or so south-east.

Riddles and Rumours

If the companions are interested in what the old man and his apprentice might tell them, Léothere needs some convincing to follow them, otherwise he will soon be on his way. A successful roll of **Persuade** (TN 16) will do, as would a roll of **Song**, to demonstrate a hero's love for the art of minstrelsy. Once he has joined the companions on their way, the old minstrel's tongue loosens up, and it is quickly clear that he is hungry for news from Edoras. For every item of news that the companions provide him, Léothere tells them something useful in return.

The Loremaster may pass on the information summarised below, based on which questions the companions ask:

- Concerning Thengel and his marshals: Éogar and Cenric have been marshals for many years. Fengel King would have named his son Second Marshal following tradition, but Thengel chose exile in Gondor over serving his father and Éogar seized his chance. Now that Thengel is King, his son Théoden is likely to become Second Marshal in a few years. That won't please Éogar, but it's the way of things and all among the Rohirrim expect it.

- Concerning the Marshals: Those were rivals even in the days of Fengel King. Fengel knew of their quarrel full well. It's one reason he chose them as marshals; old Fengel seemed to thrive best when his kingdom was bitter and fearful. The rivals outdid each other bringing gifts to Fengel King; Éogar's loot from Dunland raids and Cenric's treasures gained in trade with Gondor.

- Everything changed at court when Fengel died. Cenric and Éogar were the first to call for Thengel to come home and take the throne, but they were happier before. Fengel King may have been a greedy, callow drunk, but they knew how to manage him. Flattery and bribery and the fear of war hold no sway with Thengel King. As a consequence, Cenric and Éogar have turned their attention away from the throne and toward their hatred of each other.

- If the player-heroes seem receptive, Léothere has a few songs that mock Cenric and Éogar rather savagely. He sings of a marshal who has the blind greed of a Hill-Dwarf and the heedless wrath of a Snow-Troll, such that even his warhorse guards its treasures and its skin when the marshal is around; then he sings the same of the other marshal, and it's unclear which one is worse in his opinion.

- The minstrel knows well the story of Mildryd and Esmund. Indeed, he has songs that mock their 'tryst'. Of Esmund he sings about his apparent fear of water (since he won't cross the Entwade to find his lost love); and of Mildryd slaughtering Dunlendings and Orcs by the score out of boredom waiting for her man. Of course Léothere knows their tragic history. All the more reason, he says with surprising gentleness, for them to find each other and replace sorrow with joy.

If the company learns at least three news items from Léothere, he has one more piece of advice to offer:

- Thunder himself, the mighty horse of Béma the Huntsman, brought a warning to Léothere in his sleep: summer storms are coming early to the plains of Eastemnet. The sky-spears soon will fall when Béma leads his Great Hunt through the heavens!

Give and Take

In exchange for every piece of information that Léothere relays to the companions he asks a question of them. Here are some examples:

- What's the worst the companions can say about the new king, Thengel?
- Léothere has heard of "Queen Steelsheen's" beauty and dignity. What else can the player-heroes say about her?

- Did they speak to the son of the King, young Théoden? What lessons is he learning from his royal parents?
- Did they hear music in the Golden Hall? Stories? Laughter?
- What happened at the Entwade? What did the player-heroes do?

Additional information on Léothere is found in *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 28. He fled the Golden Hall decades ago. Fengel King is long gone, but Léothere remembers the threat in the eyes of Fengel's marshals. He has not yet determined whether it's safe to return to Edoras – whether Thengel King and Morwen Steelsheen in all their dignity will let a minstrel sing the truth and live.

A Storm Approaches

Throughout the afternoon the air darkens quicker than it should and grows very still. Any companion who succeeds at a **Travel** test senses a storm brewing.

The company finds the outskirts of Cenric's great cattle herd as sundown nears. If Léothere rode with them, here is where he departs. He wants nothing to do with Cenric; he and Bída bid farewell and turn northward again, planning to stop and sleep late at night and several miles away, perhaps after the rain has passed.

Herders hail the companions and point them toward Cenric's camp a mile or so further. Soon the companions see some of Cenric's warriors, outriders with their own camp already set. They stand around an open space laughing and watching a few horses: three stallions challenging a lead stallion, unusually young but strong, and each other.

A player-hero who makes a **Hunting** test notices that the horses' aggressive snorts, sudden whinnies, and stamping hooves have the nearby cattle even further on edge than the imminent weather. The Riders point the companions onward to Cenric's camp.

Fairy-fire

Cenric's camp is in sight despite the rolling plains and cattle, only a third of a mile away, when strange things begin to happen. The companions notice their arm-hair standing on end. Bright blue and violet fairy-lights take flickering shape: on the tips of spears, on helmets, on horses' ears and crawling along stalks of grass with a hissing sound. It's beautiful and strange. Riders wonder in alarm if they're being bewitched. Some cry in growing alarm that it's Fairy-fire from the Sorceress of the Golden Wood. Others scoff that strange lights often gather in storm season – but they can't fully stifle their fear.

A successful **Travel** or **Lore** roll recognises the fairy-fire as a sign that a storm of rare power is about to erupt – the powers of the air gathering their might, perhaps. That allows them to call out warnings to the others, who blow horn-signals and hurriedly go to their horses. Any warning will reduce the challenge to come and will be noted in a companion's favour.

Quite suddenly the storm erupts in full fury. The dim dusk becomes dark as night, so dark that sometimes only the sparks of fairy-fire can be seen on beasts' horns and ears. A thunder of rain lashes down, sheet after sheet. Lightning strikes nearby in a blinding flash and a deafening crash. Herders, Riders, horses and cows cry out in alarm. There's a quaking rumble from the ground as the cattle lurch to and fro and then begin to run in a stampede of blind panic.

Into the Thunder

How does the company react? Brave characters may try to help the herders prevent the coming chaos. Others may be wiser to get away from the maddened animals. The herders ride alongside the stampeding herd and sing simple herding-songs in clear, sonorous voices, trying to calm the animals.

Each player-hero who wants to get away to safety must roll **Athletics**. Success takes the character out of danger. Failure means the hero faces a complication and must roll once on the *Trouble of the Stampede* table below. Companions not running away from the danger may help others instead...

Stopping the Stampede

Stopping the panicked cattle-herd is a prolonged action, set at TN 18 and requiring 9 successful skill rolls. Only characters on horseback can take part in it. If any hero got wind of the impending storm with any of the rolls described before (**Travel**, **Hunting** and **Lore**) or were warned by Léothere, then the companions got a head start and see their difficulty reduced to TN 16. Each companion who wants to

cooperate on the prolonged action may choose whatever skills the players and Loremaster deem appropriate to calm the stampede: **Awareness** to hear another herder's directions, **Hunting** to pursue and herd the beasts, **Song** to calm them with a herding-song, **Athletics** to ride swiftly, and so on. Failing a skill roll triggers a complication, see *Trouble with the Stampede*, below.

The Loremaster should take note of the number of rounds that it takes the company to complete the prolonged action, as this determines the damage that the cattle herd of Cenric and his people suffer during the storm. Additionally, failing a skill roll triggers a complication (see the Trouble of the Stampede table below).

- 1 round: Three cows lost. No one is injured. (Reward 1).
- 2-3 rounds: Half a dozen cows lost. One herder injured. (Reward 2).
- 4-5 rounds: A dozen or so cows lost. Two herders injured and one horse slain. (Reward 3).
- 6+ rounds: More than a dozen cows lost. Three herders injured and two horses slain. (Reward 4).

The last entry (6+) also denotes what happens if the player-heroes do not help the horse-herds to control their animals.

Trouble with the Stampede

Player-heroes facing a complication must roll the Feat die and consult the results below:

ᚠ: The hero is trapped in the stampede! (See below).

1-4: The companion's horse runs across an unseen rivulet or hole, or the body of a fallen beast. A successful roll of Athletics (TN 16) prompts the beast to leap over the danger. On a failure, the hero falls from horseback and suffers a loss of 4 points of Endurance. If the failed roll produces an ᚠ result, the companion must also pass a Protection test (TN 14) or else suffer a Wound.

5-10: A crack of lightning and thunder sends the horse bucking and running in panic. To calm the mount the companion must roll Athletics or Song against TN 16. If the roll is failed, the hero is trapped in the stampede (see below).

ᚹ: The hero successfully overcomes the complication and emerges unscathed!

Trapped in the Stampede

A character who is trapped in the stampede may be rescued by another player-hero who is still free to move. The would-be rescuer must make an Awareness roll to spot the hapless companion, then must make an Athletics or Hunting test to grab their trapped friend and get to safety instead of attempting to calm the herd next turn. A character who is not rescued loses Endurance equal to the sum of two rolls of the Feat die and then is out of the stampede. Rolling an ᚠ means the hero must pass a Protection test (TN 14) or else suffer a Wound. Each roll of a ᚹ does no harm. A character who falls unconscious in the middle of the stampede is automatically trampled to death.

At Cenric's Camp

After a couple of hard hours the storm softens to a quiet rainfall. Cenric's exhausted herders remain with the animals, but his Riders approach the player-heroes. They are plainly grateful, if the companions helped them during the storm. If the players' efforts reduced the stampede significantly they express open, unstinting admiration.

The Riders take the company to Cenric. A few servants are restoring his pavilion, which was demolished by the storm, so Cenric greets the visitors sitting on a saddle on the ground near a hissing fire. Cenric of Eastfold is about the same age as Thengel King, his hair and beard greying, but thinner. His eyes are harder; to a perceptive hero (or an **Insight** roll) they seem more cunning but less wise.

Esmund and Gálmód are with Cenric also. Esmund is younger and taller than Cenric, and is a charismatic captain of men, with a grim face that betrays past grief. He is presently leading his éored in patrol, and has been joined by Cenric in the marshal's survey of his herds. Gálmód is Cenric's foster-son, a short, slight and sallow fellow, with friendly eyes and a mercurial temperament. He is the marshal's advisor, not a warrior.

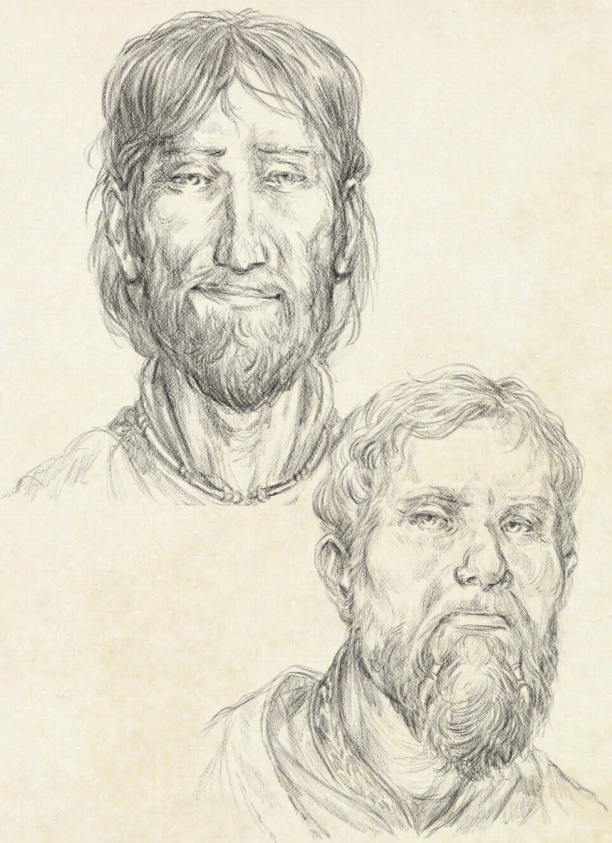
A Kingly Reward

Cenric's Riders introduce the company. They call out some particular success or piece of heroism achieved by each companion in the stampede. Esmund and Gálmód admire the heroics as Cenric listens, smiling.

At the end, Cenric clasps each companion's hand and gives his thanks. Based on the table on page 30, Cenric rewards the company according to their deeds: a riding horse (Reward 3), a fine-bred steed (Reward 2), or even a warhorse (Reward 1) if their help proved critical; golden and silver rings worth 2 Treasure if they tried to help but not to much avail (Reward 4). The Lord of the Mark leaves it to the companions' righteousness to decide who should get the most credit (and the reward!).

If the companions did very well and collected a rich reward, Gálmód and Esmund comment on Cenric's generosity. Esmund says Cenric is too free with his riches. Gálmód replies that every gift a chieftain gives raises him in the eyes of the men he would command, and Cenric plans to command many men.

The player-heroes have a chance to learn about Esmund or Gálmód while sitting with them around the fire, eating and drinking and resting. Cenric participates, friendly and willing. Esmund and Gálmód are described in *Horse-lords of Rohan*, pages 35 and 34.



How much the player-heroes learn is up to the Loremaster; it depends on how long they talk and how much they share of themselves. It will take superior success at Riddle to glean information from Esmund or Gálmód. Both have secrets: Esmund resents Cenric and is loathe to talk of his wife's death; Gálmód will never directly mention Sunnifa, his lover in Meduseld.

A Proposal for Esmund

Eventually the players will get around to telling Cenric and Esmund why they came. If they did well protecting the marshal's herd and his people, he listens much more willingly than if they stood back and let the disaster unfold.

Esmund is openly surprised to hear of the King and Queen arranged a marriage for him. When Cenric asks if Esmund would be willing to wed Mildryd, he immediately says yes. He had thought of it often since his wife died, but with the feud ongoing he saw no way to arrange it. Mildryd Shielding is as loyal to her kin as Esmund is to his.

Gálmód, strangely, is not surprised at all. If asked why, he says the idea came without warning but is not strange. He has himself counselled his lord about finding an end to the feud. But every new fight or insult only worsens things. Gálmód asks if it was Queen Morwen's idea, and is equally unsurprised to hear it was.

Persuading Cenric to let a wedding between Esmund and Mildryd resolve the feud will took some convincing...

Persuading Cenric

Following the usual rules for encounter advantages all players may now attempt **Insight** rolls to gain bonus Success dice to employ during the encounter (see Preliminary Rolls, *The One Ring*, page 151). Heroes that get a basic success also realise that **Awe** and **Riddle** will have little effect on the marshal.

A great success with **Insight** senses that the demands for weregild and for restitution for damaged property are only part of the story; the feud serves Cenric's purposes. It feeds resentment of Éogar and Westfold and keeps Cenric's kin loyal to his household against a common foe. It would be enormously unwise for the player-heroes to challenge Cenric on that – he would take it as a grave insult and the encounter would end immediately in wrath – but it does gives a bonus Success die that the spokesperson can roll during the Interaction if the player can think of a way to manipulate Cenric's true motivations.

Additionally, the player-heroes have a very brief moment in which they might get Gálmód to vouch for the idea before they start actively trying to persuade Cenric. Gálmód is not naturally willing to overstep his bounds, so it requires a **Persuade** roll. Success grants a bonus die in the Encounter with Cenric, or two for a great success or three for an extraordinary success.

Set Tolerance

When the talk deals with a feud, courage and strength-of-arms is all that matters to Cenric, so initial Tolerance is set equal to the highest Valour amongst the companions. Add 1 to the Tolerance if the player-heroes took risks to help in the stampede.

The Loremaster can evaluate the outcome of the Encounter with Cenric using the total number of successes achieved to determine its consequences and then conside the possible outcomes listed under *Cenric's Decision* below.

Introduction

If the companions assisted with the stampede, there is no need for an introduction. He is willing to hear them. If they did not, then **Courtesy** may smooth their explanation for why they stood back and watched.

Interaction

Cenric's instinct is to refuse the proposal outright. The player-heroes must try to make him reconsider. **Inspire** may succeed by playing on his pride as a Rider in the greatness of the Eorlingas as a united people. **Song** too may work by singing or telling a story of the Eorlingas that emphasises their strength in unity. **Persuade** is appropriate for most arguments the companion might wish to put to Cenric. **Riddle** is risky; Cenric has little patience for clever words – unless they are especially clever. Successful **Riddle** rolls garners additional successes normally, but a failed **Riddle** roll reduces the Tolerance by 2 instead of 1.

Cenric's Decision

The player-heroes must roll a number of successes to bring Cenric around. The more successes they achieve

before the Tolerance is exceeded, the more Cenric gives up. The entries below take into consideration the outcome of an encounter with Éogar, to assess the final success or failure of the diplomatic endeavours of the company.

1. (Narrow Success): Cenric agrees to peace with minor concessions. He is willing to forego a few of his household's demands. This will mean peace if the company earns 5 or more successes in their negotiation with Éogar.

2-4. (Success): Cenric agrees to peace with substantial concessions. He will drop some of his household's demands and even agree to make a token payment toward Éogar's demands. This means peace if the company earns 2 or more successes in their negotiation with Éogar.

5-6. (Great Success): Cenric agrees to peace with major concessions, dropping most of his demands. This means peace if the company earns 1 or more successes in their negotiation with Éogar.

7+. (Extraordinary Success): Cenric has had a dramatic change of heart and is willing to forego the feud immediately, dropping all demands, even if the player-heroes earn no successes in their negotiations with Éogar. They have only to put the case before the Second Marshal to have peace.

Success

If the negotiations succeed at any level, Esmund gladly says he will go to Mildryd and have her if she will have him. He follows the companions to the Entwade and there either meet with Mildryd, or wait for her or word of her refusal. Otherwise, he will abide by his loyalty to his household.

Failure

If the player-heroes exceed the Tolerance rating before the companions can earn any successes, Cenric refuses out of hand and loses patience with the company. He will end the feud and greet his old rival in friendship at Esmund's wedding only if Éogar agrees to pay all the treasure and land and horses that Cenric says he owes – an unreasonable amount (something made possible only if the companions earn 7 or more successes negotiating with Éogar). Otherwise, only spilt blood will satisfy him.

After the Storm

However it goes (unless the player-heroes managed to greatly offend him during the encounter) Cenric allows them to rest in his camp until they wish to depart. If the companions came to Cenric before approaching Éogar, proceed on to *Part Four: The River-reavers*.

- Part Four -
The River-reavers

Coming from either Edoras or the Entwade, the company must travel to the Fords of Isen to find Éogar. Along the way the player-heroes pass herds in the Westemnet and, as the mountains draw together near the Gap, scattered Westfold farms and steadings.

- The quickest route from Cenric's camp in the Eastemnet to the Gap of Rohan is back to Edoras, then along the Great West Road from there. The journey to Edoras is 90 miles, taking 2 and a half days and one Fatigue test (TN 14).

- The journey from Edoras to the Gap of Rohan along the Great West Road is 110 miles. It only takes a day and a half due to the quality of the road, and a single Fatigue test (TN 12).

An Urgent Errand

Approaching the Gap of Rohan the player-heroes cross paths with Rynelda Fast-rider (see *Horse-lords of Rohan,* page 58, for a complete description), hurrying along the road towards Edoras. She stops just long enough to breathlessly tell the companions that the Second Marshal needs aid and they can learn more from Grimborn at the Fords of Isen.

She is riding for Edoras with Éogar's request to raise the muster of Westfold. If the companions don't try to stop her and ask questions, she spurs her horse onward again and rides out of sight. Convincing her to delay long enough to answer questions requires a successful skill roll.

- **Awe** is most suited to have Rynelda pause and listen to what the companions have to say. She admires bold warriors who do not hide behind fanciful words.

- She's too much in a hurry for someone to stop her long enough to use **Persuade**, or even **Song** and **Riddle**, so any such attempt simply fails.

- **Inspire** can be a good choice if the companions reveal to Rynelda they are helping the King.

If the attempted roll fails, Rynelda tells the company to ask Grimborn at the Fords and then gallops off. Any success causes her to stay long enough to tell what she knows, but she does so quickly; Rynelda is too desperate to tarry. "Join Grimborn at the Fords or join Éogar in the West-march, by the Derne Wood," she cries. "Do as you will. I must ride!"

Trouble in the West-march

A week ago, Éogar left his home in Helm's Deep to travel to the Dunlendish West-march, the land between the rivers Adorn and Isen, to prepare for the spring's first patrol of the marches in the name of the King of the Mark. He rode out with Mildryd Shielding, at the lead of a selection of men from his personal *éored*, and his wife Esfled (their son Erkenbrand, who is 10 in 2960, might have been with them also).

All in all, Éogar crossed into the West-march with about sixty Riders.

Two days after their departure, they stopped in a cool, wooded valley of waterfalls and green shade, deep in the folds of the hills and lower slopes of Thrihyrne, about 20 miles south of the Gap of Rohan. As they were setting up their camp, night fell and a thick fog descended on them from the mountains, shutting out the light of the stars and moon and drowning everything in an unnatural silence.

The Riders of Westfold could not see anything beyond arm's length. Then the horses began to whinny for no apparent reason and the camp was sent into confusion. Esfled was gone! But in the dark fog there was little that could be done...

After some frantic searching, Éogar's scouts discovered the tracks of a group of men, a warband that evidently penetrated the encampment hiding in the fog and left after having taken Esfled with them. Judging from the tracks and the direction they took after leaving, the kidnappers were men from the westernmost marches, members of the Dunlendish Gáesela (see *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 57).

Éogar and his Riders immediately followed the tracks, often losing the trail and then finding it again. The trail seemed to be going more south than west, and eventually led them to the edges of a forest, the Derne Wood, covering a line of low hills. By then three days had passed.

One day ago Éogar sent a messenger carrying word for Grimborn, Lord of Grimslade (see *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 42) to gather his men and call for reinforcements in case they encountered trouble with locals.

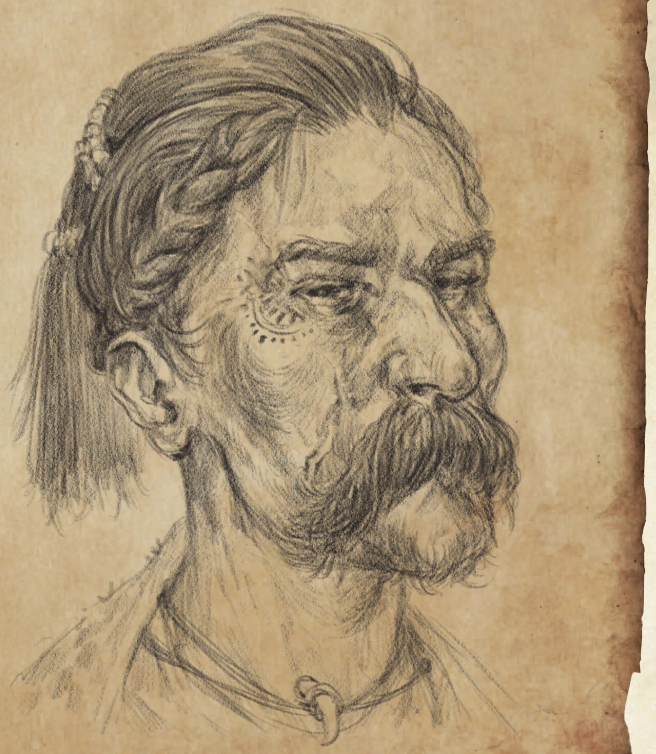
The West-march is home to the Gáesela, but also to the Wulfings, heirs to both Rohirrim and Dunlendish blood, and their lord Frána does not suffer gladly the intrusion of Riders from Edoras.

Grimborn is now gathering Riders at the Fords of Isen. Unless he hears a command from Thengel King, in three days he will join Éogar and ride south upon the West-march in force. Rynelda set out at daybreak to carry the word to Edoras and it was then that she encountered the companions.

The River-reavers

The raiders that took Esfled are members of the Iron-folk, a rebel tribe from the northernmost West-march, led by a chieftain named Caswelun and his twin sister Rhonwen. Caswelun, who has dozens of children from women all along the Isen, made himself infamous among the Gáesela a few years ago saying that he would only take as his wife a great lady of the Riddermark. He seems to have decided to finally fulfil his promise...

As desperate as it may appear, Caswelun has a plan. The Derne Wood is the ideal sanctuary for a band of marauders, and is in the middle of the West-march, between Gáetír and the land of the Wulfings. Caswelun plans to hide there until the Lord of Frecasburg will come to face Éogar and question him about his business in the West-march. Trouble will certainly ensue and the cunning raider will profit from it, and disappear with his prize. This outcome will be made certain if Éogar fails to find where Caswelun hides with his men, or if Grimborn rides to the aid of his marshal, as the Wulfings will be up in arms in no time.



The Riders of Westfold

If the companions go towards the Fords of Isen they find Grimborn, Éogar's chief lieutenant, preparing for a brutal ride south from the Gap of Rohan in three days. Grimborn and the Riders at the Fords of Isen can provide any background the company did not get from Rynelda.

Grimborn says the Dunlendings of West-march must have gone mad to take the Lady of Westfold. They must be taught a lesson, and Grimborn will make sure it will be a lesson they won't forget soon.

The Lord of Grimslade says it would be better for the player-heroes to remain with him than to scatter into the West-march, but he does not stop them if they go on.

Into the West-march

To enter the West-march, the company must leave the Great West Road and take the muddy road leading south. It passes by Grimslade, the valley that is home to reckless Grimborn, and leads into a country that is wilder than the vales of Westfold or Eastfold. From time to time the road passes meagre little villages of the mixed folk of the West-march, fishers and farmers, some more Dunlending and some closer to the Eorlingas. It is a fertile, wooded land with many hills and valleys tumbling out from the mountains.

A player-hero possessing the *Riddermark-lore* trait may attempt a **Lore** roll to know where to find the Derne Wood. Failing that, the companions may ask for directions in the villages; but the villagers and farmers rush indoors at the first sound of hurrying hooves.

A skill roll is needed to coax them out, but trying to intimidate them with **Awe** only makes them all the more suspicious (threatening them with physical violence or actually harming them is a *misdeed*).

To find the wood without help or directions takes three days. If they know or learn the way it only takes one.

The Old Camp

Before reaching the Derne Wood, the companions find the location of the old encampment of Éogar, in the foothills of the western White Mountains. There they find a dozen of Riders from Westfold, left on guard to watch over the possessions of the men that left in haste to pursue the kidnappers. Angry and suspicious, these men grudgingly confirm the whereabouts of their Lord if asked, but offer no help to the companions. They let them investigate the area if they wish to do so.

If the companions search for signs of the raiders themselves, they easily find those tracks that the scouts of Éogar already found, and they can be on the trail of the raiders in no time.

- If they choose to follow the trail, the task can be set up as a prolonged action, requiring 8 total successes (see *The One Ring*, page 149). Each companion is allowed to attempt two rolls each day (see *Actions while Travelling*, page 162 of *The One Ring*). Useful skills include primarily **Hunting**, then **Explore**, **Search**, or even **Riddle** (to interpret the most puzzling clues the heroes discover).

It takes three days for the companions to reach Éogar and his men camping outside the Derne Wood: if they manage to achieve the successes needed to complete the prolonged action before that time, the player-heroes stumble across the Dunlending raiders themselves before they find Éogar (see *The Hideout*). Otherwise, they arrive at the camp of the pursuers (skip ahead to *Joining the Marshal*).

The Hideout

If the company completed the prolonged action to follow the trail of the abductors, they succeed where the men of Westfold failed and find tracks approaching the Derne Wood from a more southerly direction than that followed by Éogar's scouts. Companions with relevant traits (or those passing an **Awareness** test) catch a man's distant laughter on a stray gust of wind, coming from deeper in the woods; a great or extraordinary success on the skill roll tells the laughter was not from one of the Eorlingas.

The companion need now decide how to investigate the matter. They may send a spy ahead, or try to approach stealthily as a group.

- A companion seeking the source of the laughter must make a **Stealth** test (TN 18) to get close, and another test at the same difficulty to get away. Any failure alerts the look-outs among the Dunlending raiding party, and the Dunlendings quickly retreat into the deep woods.

If approached silently, the companions may have a good look at the Dunlendings. They are encamped by a brook running among large mossy boulders, well hidden in the dense woodland. They are wild-looking men and women in leather and furs, dusky-hued with bushy dark hair, led by a tall man and woman so alike that they must be twins. It is a small warband, one raider for every companion plus their two leaders, but they seem determined and well-armed. Laid across a bed of leaves and twigs is a large bundle: a woman bound up tight and hooded with a sack.

- If the companions are able to spy the raiders and get away undetected, they will probably attempt to ambush them and try to free Esfled. If they tarry, they will be probably forced to pursue the raiders as they move their camp. (see *Confronting the Raiders* on page 38).

If they wish to take action, they quickly realise that the woods are too deep for riding and horses will have to be led on foot or left out of the woods.

Joining the Marshal

The companions find the marshal's new camp to the north of the Derne Wood. Éogar waits there as his men patrol the perimeter of the forest night and day. Each patrol has three Riders: two to hunt and track and one to ride quickly back to brooding Éogar when the Dunlendings are found.

When they arrive, the player-heroes are spotted by one of the patrols and are hailed in a grim-faced greeting.

From them, the companions discover that the men of Westfold have had little clear sign of the raiders so far, for the Dunlendings are skilled at escaping pursuit. Éogar is determined to keep searching until he finds his wife or else Grimborn arrives with hundreds of Riders to lay waste to the West-march in revenge. Mildryd Shielding is with the Lord of Westfold, as the captain of his Riders. The Riders warn that she and Éogar are in a fell mood.

Soon another Rider comes, a messenger to take reports. He brings the player-heroes to Éogar's camp some miles away. When they encounter them, it is clear that Éogar and Mildryd are unwilling to discuss anything except the abduction. Should the company try to discuss the proposed wedding and truce now, Éogar and Mildryd would angrily tell them to either turn their attention to the search or find some farmer's wife to hear their gossip.

Éogar and Mildryd

Éogar is older than Thengel King, with long, braided hair and beard turned grey long ago. He is stout and strong with fierce blue eyes. Mildryd Shielding, daughter of Galwyn, is in her early thirties, tall and strong, an energetic woman, quick to anger. Éogar is like a father for her, as her own family are all dead, parents and husband and children alike.

If the companions volunteer to help Éogar in his plight, then Mildryd loses no time in finding some use for them. She assigns them a stretch of land to cover, arraying them in pairs with single messengers like the other Riders.

During the following days, the player-heroes take part in the search for Esfled, contributing with their skill rolls in locating the band of kidnappers (**Awareness**, **Search** or **Riddle** are all useful choices).

- The companions need 8 successes to find clues about the locations of Caswelun's camp. If the companions achieve the number of successes required within three days, then they find tracks leading to Caswelun! Unless they use the information to confront the raiders on their own (see page 38), the ensuing violent confrontation leads soon to the same outcome: the raiders are greatly outnumbered by the men of Westfold and are soon overwhelmed - but not before Caswelun abandons his men to flee! The companions must now pursue (see *Pursuit*).

- If they search for three days without getting 8 successes, one morning a group of armed riders from Frecasburg makes its appearance, delivering a challenge to the authority of the Second Marshal of the Mark (see below). The men from Frecasburg will also arrive if the companions tarry and take no actions for those three days.

Men from Frecasburg

A messenger comes galloping hard over the rough meadows and through the trees. The wide-eyed young Rider says that three-dozen Riders of the Wulfings are riding towards the camp, a lieutenant of their lord Frána at their lead.

Minutes later, a troop of armoured riders appear, heading straight for the spot where Éogar and his bodyguard stand. They are fully armed and ready for battle, and stop only when the marshal's men hop on horseback and form a line of riders before their lord.

A tall man of about thirty years of age and wearing a thick fur mantle on his shoulders leaps from his horse and in a blur of silver unsheathes his sword. Before the men of Éogar's retinue can react, he jabs his sword-point deeply it in the ground before his feet in a furious motion. Then, he raises his defiant gaze to meet that of the Second Marshal.

"What are you Mark-men doing in my Lord's land? You have no business here! You, Éogar! Take your lackeys back to your pastures and barns!"

This grim and rash fellow is Déormód, nephew to Frána, Lord of the Wulfings. He has come to find out what is the Second Marshal doing riding about in the land of the Wulfings, and to warn Éogar that his days of raiding into the West-march are over. While it is unlikely that

Déormód will actually carry his threats to their ultimate consequences, it will take hours for him and Éogar to come to peaceful terms.

This is the occasion that Caswelun was waiting for. As Déormód and Éogar face each other off and the men of the Second Marshal abandon their positions around the Derne Wood to rush to the aid of their lord, the Dunlendings seize their chance and sneak out of the forest...

This is the last occasion for the player-heroes to prove their worth and recover Esfled.

Confronting the Raiders

There are several ways for the companions to confront the Dunlending raiders of Caswelun and his twin sister. The following paragraphs deal with the most plausible possibilities. Should the companions choose an unexpected way (for example, a diplomatic approach) then the Loremaster may refer to the standard rules for encounters presented in *The One Ring*.

Battle

Should the companions try to attack the raiders in the Derne Wood at night, the wary Dunlendings will attempt to ambush them (see *Being Ambushed*, page 167 of *The One Ring*). Otherwise, the companions may try and ambush the raiders themselves (see *Ambushing Enemies*, page 168 of *The One Ring*).

However battle begins, the Dunlending raiders are not fanatics, their leader Caswelun least of all. Any raider who loses more than half their Endurance attempts to escape combat or surrenders. Caswelun attempts to stay away from close combat as much as possible.

- If more than two raiders fall, surrender or take flight, Caswelun flees: he picks up Esfled, and runs away into the woods while his sister and tribesmen engage the enemy. After two more rounds, the rest of the raiders scatter and escape as well.

- If the fight takes an ill turn for the player-heroes instead, the raiders take no time to profit from their misfortune: they leave fallen enemies and dead kin behind and rush away. They are not interested in exterminating the companions, they want to leave with their lives and their prize.

If the raiders break away from combat, the companions may try to pursue them (see Pursuit below – otherwise, see opposite for the combat characteristics of Caswelun and his men).

Pursuit

The company must pursue the raiders if Caswelun and his men successfully break away from combat, or if the companions do not attack the raiders soon after they find where they hide, as Caswelun will move their camp after each nightfall to avoid detection (the company will discover the morning after that the raiders simply disappeared and that they have missed their chance to get them if they do not keep a watch over the raiders' camp).

- To follow the warband as it moves through the wood (or to catch Caswelun as he flees with Esfled, see *Battle* above) the companions must achieve a prolonged action requiring 6 successful rolls (see *The One Ring*, page 149).

Each companion is allowed to attempt two rolls each day. Useful skills include primarily **Hunting**, then **Explore**, **Search**, but also **Athletics**, as the companions are trying to close in with the fleeing Dunlendings.

- Failing a roll during the prolonged action means that the hero confused the tracks and the trail is lost momentarily: add 1 success to the total required to achieve the action.

- If a hero fails producing an , the trail is lost and the prolonged action fails completely.

If the company catches up with the raiders and it is not the first time they face the Dunlendings, this time Caswelun fights for his life.

Rhonwen

Rhonwen is Caswelun's twin sister. Caswelun often leads his men by his enthusiasm and energy, but wary Rhonwen has kept them safe. She wishes she had convinced her brother to quit this whole scheme.

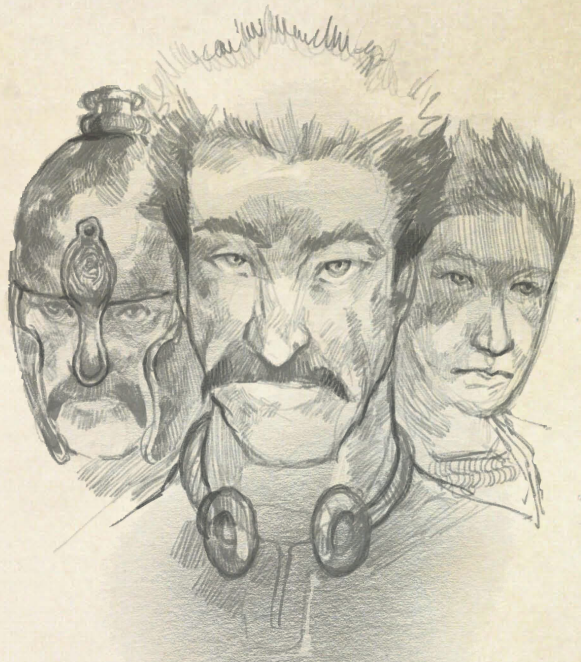
Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
20	4
Parry	Armour
7	2d
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 3
Movement, 4	Custom, 2
Perception, 3	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Spear	4
Axe	3
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
Commanding Voice (Reduce Rhonwen's Hate score by 1 to restore 1 Hate to all other Dunlendings involved in the confrontation.)	

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Spear	5	9	14	Pierce
Axe	5		18	Break shield
Dagger	3		12	-

The Raiders' Warband

There is one stern, wild-looking raider per companion. Two have bows and the rest have spears and axes.



Warriors of the Gáesela

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	Hate
16	3
Parry	Armour
6	1d
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 3
Movement, 2	Custom, 2
Perception, 3	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
Spear	3
Bow	3
Axe	2
Special Abilities	
Snake-like Speed	-

Weapons:

Weapon Type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bow	5	10	12	Pierce
Spear	5	9	14	Pierce
Axe	5		18	Break shield

Caswelun

Reckless Caswelun still ponders keeping Esfled as his unwilling wife, but he might take the captive to Frána of Frecasburg as a gift instead.

Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
20	4
Parry	Armour
6	1d
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 3
Movement, 4	Custom, 2
Perception, 3	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Spear	4
Axe	3
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
Snake-like Speed	-

Weapons:

Weapon Type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Spear	5	9	14	Pierce
Axe	5		18	Break shield
Dagger	3		12	-

If Esfled is Lost

If Caswelun flees or otherwise Esfled remains in Dunlending hands, neither Éogar nor Mildryd will hear any talk of the feud or marriage. Whether they faced the Wulfings or not, they retreat out of the West-march to meet Grimborn and the men he mustered at the Fords of Isen. By then word has come from Thengel King granting leave to raid into the West-march for two weeks to rescue or avenge Esfled.

Éogar, Mildryd, and Grimborn prepare to wreak vengeance on the hapless Dunlending villages and then turn south to make demands of Frána, Lord of the Wulfings. They leave the companions to bring the ill tidings to Thengel King in Edoras.

A Proposal for Mildryd

If the player-heroes saved Esfled the Second Marshal honours and rewards them with gold rings, bracelets and assorted Treasure for each equal to the sum of each player-hero's Valour and Standing scores. If they assisted Éogar and his Riders in her rescue, they are each given a ring or other ornament worth 2 Treasure. Then he sits down with Mildryd at his side to hear their proposal from Thengel.

Mildryd is surprised by the turning of the events, but she remains quiet and thoughtful. She says that she knew Esmund of old and they were the closest of friends in

youth. She cannot now remember any happiness, her life has been bitter, but she will take Esmund to husband if Éogar will give his blessing and release her from his service as a Shieldmaiden. Mildryd leaves unsaid the fact that if Éogar does not release her from service she will remain with her lord.

Following the rules for encounter advantages all players may now attempt **Insight** rolls to gain bonus Success dice (see *Preliminary Rolls*, *The One Ring* page 151).

Set Tolerance

Éogar's reputation and honour are at stake, so he values men and women of strong arms over strong minds. The initial Tolerance is set equal to the highest Valour from amongst the companions.

The Loremaster can evaluate the outcome of the Encounter with Éogar using the total number of successes achieved and checking the *Éogar's Will* paragraph below.

Interaction

There's no need for an Introduction stage for this encounter. If the player-heroes rescued Esfled by themselves, Éogar is already favourably disposed to them, reducing the TN of all their efforts to 12. Either way, Esfled remains close and her favour of the plan is what makes Éogar willing to listen. She keenly sees the wisdom of making peace with Esmund and, by that, with Thengel King.

Still, Éogar clings to the hunger for vengeance against Cenric and his kin, including Esmund. **Inspire** might persuade Éogar out of his love for Mildryd.

Éogar says Cenric's household owes him much treasure in weregild and in land for marriages spoiled and stolen: **Persuade** may convince Éogar of the value of generosity in forgiving debts if Cenric forgives (or already forgave) his as well.

Éogar's pride makes him stubborn, more willing to ignore the King's wishes than to make peace: **Awe** might impress him that a Rider of that player-hero's calibre sees peace as honourable and the feud as petty. Finally, **Song** might move him with a verse about the Eorlingas standing together under their king against true foes.

Éogar's Will

The Second Marshal's response depends on the number of successes the companions achieve before running out of Tolerance.

The player-heroes must roll a number of successes to bring Cenric around. The more successes they roll before the Tolerance is exceeded, the more Éogar is willing to listen to their arguments.

The entries below take into consideration the outcome of an encounter with Cenric, to assess the final success or failure of the diplomatic endeavours of the company.

1. (Narrow Success): Éogar agrees to peace with minor concessions. He has many negotiations to undertake with Cenric but is willing to make the attempt. This means peace if the company earns 5 or more successes in their negotiation with Cenric.

2-4. (Success): Éogar agrees to peace and sees the justice in many of Cenric's claims. He will meet Cenric and expects to put the feud behind them. This means peace if the company earns 2 or more successes in their negotiation with Cenric.

5-6. (Great Success): Éogar agrees to peace with major concessions, dropping most demands. This means peace if

the company earns 1 or more successes in their negotiation with Cenric.

7+. (Extraordinary Success): Éogar has had a dramatic change of heart and is willing to forego the feud immediately, dropping all demands, even if the player-heroes earn no successes in their negotiations with Cenric. They have only to put the case before the Third Marshal to have peace.

Success

If the negotiations succeed at any level, Mildryd will go with the companions to the Entwade and either meet with Esmund, or wait for him or word of his refusal. Otherwise, she will remain with her lord.

Failure

If the player-heroes exceed the Tolerance of the encounter with no successes, Éogar angrily loses patience and says he'd sooner see Esmund spitted on his spear than greet him as a kinsman.

- Part Five -
A Blood-Red Evening

The course of the final part of this adventure depends on what came before.

- If the player-heroes went first to Éogar and succeeded in persuading him, then Mildryd Shielding came with them and waited at the Entwade while they negotiated with Cenric. If they then succeeded at negotiations with Cenric, they return to the Entwade with Esmund. If negotiations with Cenric failed, they return to the Entwade with the bad news that Esmund won't come.

- If the player-heroes went first to Cenric and succeeded, then Esmund came with them and waited at the Entwade while they negotiated with Éogar. If they then succeeded at negotiations with Éogar, they return to the Entwade with Mildryd. If negotiations with Éogar failed, they return to the Entwade with the bad news that Mildryd won't come.

Riding with Mildryd

Journeying with Mildryd to the Entwade, the company can learn more about her and her relationship with Esmund if they wish. She is grudging about such matters at first out of long habit as a ruthless captain of warriors. But as long as the companions are respectful she confirms what they may have heard in Edoras. She and Esmund were childhood friends and came to love each other in their youth, but they heeded family loyalty and married others. She was happy enough with her husband and Esmund seemed happy with his wife. Perhaps she and Esmund can be friends again in marriage if that will help their households. A successful **Insight** roll senses that she yearns for the chance at happiness but doubts it will be hers.

Mildryd says readily that Esmund would be Third Marshal now if not for his youth when Cenric bribed Fengel King for the post. She thinks Esmund would have been a wiser marshal by far; but she doubts he would have lasted long under Fengel's capricious rule: Fengel King valued gold over wisdom.

Riding with Esmund

Journeying with Esmund to the Entwade, the company can confirm some of the same details they would have learned from Mildryd. He says he was happy with his wife, but he thinks he and Mildryd may be happy with each other now. Esmund says nothing about his opinion of Cenric as marshal. Only if they know him very well, or if they succeed at an **Insight** roll, do the player-heroes discern that he rues having been too young and naive to keep the post after his father died in Fengel's day. But he is loyal to Cenric even if he has little love for him.

The Gathering at the Entwade

The company reaches the Entwade near day's end. A dim and sullen sunset reddens the Entwash, casting long shadows over the swirling waters. Two loose camps are still set up on either side of the Entwade, east and west.

The tension level of the two camps and the corresponding levels of difficulty the company will have in their dealings with them depends on their actions in the previous parts of *Red Days Rising*.

If the player-heroes failed to reduce tension between the rivals in *Flytes at the Fords*, or worse, got in a fight, then a dark mood is thick in the air here, with bitter warriors on each side quietly awaiting the renewal of bloodshed and they will be little willing to pay heed to what the company has to say.

If they succeeded in preventing bloodshed or even actively brought the two sides together, the atmosphere is far more relaxed with songs and actual (cautious) criss-crossing of warriors between the two camps.

If the player-heroes left Mildryd Shielding at the Entwade among the Riders of Westfold, or else left Esmund here among Riders of Eastfold, this also will have served to reduce some tension, for both leaders will have actively discouraged hostility and violence.

If they Return in Triumph

If the company have managed to bring Esmund and Mildryd together at the Entwade, then at first there is surprised gladness on both sides. The estranged lovers meet in the middle of the ford on their horses and confirm their willingness to join in friendship and marriage, first in quiet voices to each other.

Then they encourage the player-heroes – it is the companions' doing, after all – to announce that Cenric and Éogar have agreed to meet and find an end to the feud.

But as soon as one of the player-heroes begins to make the announcement, an angry Rider interrupts with a shout...

If they Return in Sorrow

If the player-heroes return to the Entwade in failure, bringing word to Esmund that Mildryd won't come or bringing word to Mildryd that Esmund won't come, then the one who waited hears the news with sorrow but not surprise. The feud has lasted many years and it will take more than the mere promise of goodwill to end it.

Esmund or Mildryd, whichever is present, leads the Riders on his or her side of the river away, withdrawing to rejoin their respective marshal. Most follow – but not all...

Hard Words

Whether the player-heroes have made peace by bringing Esmund and Mildryd together, or have brought word of their failed attempt, there is still anger over their meddling in a matter that "doesn't concern them". One of these embittered Riders will seek to challenge the player-heroes for interfering.

- If Cenric agreed to peace, the Rider is Blódred of Eastfold. He says that some in Eastfold shall never forget lands stolen and murders unavenged.

- If Éogar agreed to peace, the lead Rider is Blódred of Westfold. He says that some in Westfold shall never forget their dead or weregild still unpaid.

- If neither Cenric nor Éogar agreed to peace (or both did), then Blódred's allegiance is to whichever faction the company had the most trouble with (either by number of failed rolls or strained roleplaying).

Blódred declares that the companions have joined the feud by interfering with it, he is furiously angry, raging over the unavenged death of his lover, brother, child, etc. The Loremaster should work to make his words sting, for he, like many, has been wronged in the ongoing feud, and many Rohirrim would argue that he has a right to vengeance. If there is a great deal of tension in the camp, other Riders may well place themselves about Blódred, ready to back him if violence ensues. The heroes will have to talk him down, or blood may well be spilt...

The following encounter scene is entirely structured by the company's previous successes and failures. Standing, Valour, Wisdom – none of them hold sway here, only the player-heroes actions count.

Set Tolerance

Blódred stands on the sword's edge and is prepared to die. His Tolerance level starts at 0, but it can be modified by several factors. If the company failed to prevent a fight at the Entwade earlier, but made a decent attempt to stop it, raise the Tolerance by 1. If they actively caused or joined a fight, reduce the Tolerance by 1. If they succeeded in bringing about an acceptable resolution, raise Tolerance

by 2. If they had a Great Success during the Flytes, Mearstan and Ashgar have since become boon drinking companions. They call out to Blódred and those with him to stop this foolishness. They do not raise Tolerance, they lower the difficulty of speaking to Blódred from TN 16 to TN 14. If Mildred or Esmund was present at the camps helping to reduce tensions, raise Tolerance by 1.

If the Tolerance is below 0, then a companion may spend a point of Hope to have a chance to prevent bloodshed. The hero must make a **Persuade** or **Song** roll (TN 16) and achieve a great or extraordinary success to make Blódred pause and listen (briefly).

Interaction

The aim of the company is to talk Blódred out of doing anything rash. At the same time, they have to be aware of all the eyes on them, and that they cannot afford to appear cowardly or lack reasons for their actions.

Calming Blódred down is a prolonged action requiring 6 successful rolls against TN 16 (TN 14 if Mearstan and Ashgar have become friends). The players can choose whatever approach they wish, some will work better than others and everyone present is listening closely...

- **Awe** is near useless. Blódred already knows who the company are and some of what they've done. Awe can help to sway the surrounding crowd a bit. An extraordinary success counts as a single successful roll.
- **Persuade** will also be hard to use as Blódred has been steeling himself against such arguments for some time. A great success or better counts as a single successful roll, but may well move the surrounding Riders.
- This is not the time for **Riddle**.
- Surprisingly, **Inspire** can work, if the companion makes a passionate argument about the benefits of standing together. A non-Rohirrim making such an argument gets to lower the difficulty by 1 level (-2 to the TN).
- No Eorling is unmoved by **Song**.

If the company manages to achieve the needed successes before Tolerance is exceeded, Blódred is reluctantly persuaded to withdraw. The hard set of his eyes does not readily change, but his mood clearly shifts and he retreats to his camp to brood. Tension at the Entwade lessens considerably. If Tolerance is exceeded, Blódred chooses the companion with the highest Valour and challenges them to a duel to the death. He immediately draws his sword and attacks without quarter.

Blódred

The thirst for vengeance has consumed him, turning Hope to Hate in lesser measure.

Attribute Level	
6	
Endurance	Hate
22	3
Parry	Armour
5 + 2 (Shield)	4d+4 (Coat of Mail, Helm)
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 1
Movement, 4	Custom, 2
Perception, 1	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
Spear	3
Sword	3
Dagger	1

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Great Spear	9	9	14	Pierce
Sword	5	10	16	Disarm
Dagger	3	👁	12	-

The Red Entwade

Was blood spilt or did reason triumph? Is Blódred dead or only injured? All present judge the company on their words and deeds.

When the fighting is done, Riders and esquires from both sides approach to see to the wounded and the dead.

Does one of the player-heroes consider this to be the appropriate moment to announce news of the impending wedding if there is to be one? If not, Mildryd raises her voice so all can hear. She says that if Éogar will seek peace, so will she; and if her friend Esmund seeks marriage, so does she. Then Esmund raises his voice and says that if Cenric seeks peace, who are any of his kin to refuse? And if his friend Mildryd will take him as husband, he will take her as wife. The other Riders laugh, appreciating their boldness.

Many of the rivals come forward and gruffly begin to greet each other as friends. Weeks or months of talks and planning lie ahead, but Mildryd and Esmund come together in the promise of peace.

If the companions fought against Blódred without having brought Mildryd and Esmund together, then whichever of them is present thanks the company. He or she honours the player-heroes for their courage and their sacrifice in trying to secure peace on Thengel King's behalf, and wishes without much hope that the feuding Sons of Eorl might be brought to wisdom after all.

- Epilogue -

What tidings does the company bring to Edoras?

If Esfled was not returned to her husband, Thengel King has already departed to gather Riders from Helm's Deep and Westfold. Queen Morwen Steelsheen thanks them for their efforts and says that even valour and wisdom are sometimes overcome by dark deeds. She assures them that Thengel will remember their efforts on his behalf. After meeting the Queen, the companions may join the Westfold host as Thengel rides through the Gap of Rohan.

By then Éogar has burnt and pillaged many Dunlending villages along the Isen. Thengel and Frána of the Wulfings meet outside Frecasburg and Frána returns Esfled to him, saying that he only had her as a guest to protect her from the Riders' many enemies. He asks no ransom, even though he secretly paid a rich one to Caswelun. It is enough to humiliate the Eorlingas.

If the player-heroes rescued Esfled but the truce fell apart, Thengel thanks them himself. He is disappointed in his marshals, but not in the companions who strove so hard on his behalf to save the marshals from themselves. Any player-hero may undertake to gain Thengel or Morwen as a patron in the Fellowship phase, or the company may open Edoras as a sanctuary. Thengel lets each companion choose a fine-bred steed from those in his own stables (see *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 133).

If the player-heroes secured the marriage and a promise of peace between Cenric and Éogar, Thengel and Morwen praise the player-heroes as warriors both valiant and wise. Thengel gifts each companion with a fine-bred steed from his stables; he also gives each gold, silver and jewels worth 1 Treasure per point of the hero's Standing in any culture, plus the hero's Valour or Wisdom, whichever is greater. The player-heroes may gain Thengel or Morwen as patrons or may open Edoras as a sanctuary.

The wedding between Mildryd and Esmund will take place the following winter. See *The Woes of Winter*, page 106.

- Wrath of - the Riders

- **When:** This quest is set in the summer of 2960 – though it could be set during a different summer, sometime early in Thengel King's reign. It should follow after the events of the adventure *Red Days Rising*, where the deadly bitterness between the Rohirrim and the Dunlendings can be seen first-hand.

- **Where:** The adventure begins at Helm's Deep, but it takes the company along the River Isen and into Dunland.

- **What:** Rebellion festers in the north of the West-march of Rohan. Thengel King has ordered Éogar, Second Marshal of the Riddermark, to offer a truce to the Dunlendish folk that lives along the River Isen.For long and bitter years, Éogar has fought the Dunlendings and recently raiders from that land dared to kidnap his wife (see *Red Days Rising*). So, rather than refuse the command outright, Éogar sends the player-heroes to make the offer.

- **Why:** Thengel's father Fengel encouraged vicious raids and reprisals between the Rohirrim and the Dunlendings, and Thengel King wants to see an end to this policy. If Éogar makes the truce, then the rest of the Rohirrim will certainly follow.

- **Who:** The company's mission comes from Éogar, Second Marshal of the Riddermark and Lord of Westfold. In Dunland they meet adversaries who they may have faced in battle during *Red Days Rising*, Caswelun and his twin sister Rhonwen.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into five parts, which begin at Helm's Deep and ends in Dunland.

Part One - The Marshal's Command

The companions are guests of Éogar, Second Marshal of the Riddermark, when he returns from an unhappy meeting with Thengel King. Éogar puts the burden of Thengel's command on the player-heroes. But does he send them as trusted allies or as potential rivals for the King's favour?

Part Two - Beyond the Crossings

The company crosses the River Isen. Meeting the Riders stationed at the ford, they will find that many warriors of the Rohirrim are baffled at Thengel King's offer of peace to their savage foes.

Part Three - Into the Red Moor

The player-heroes journey through a land tormented by raids and brigandry. They have an opportunity to help a family heal and to learn the hearts of their adversaries, if their own hearts are willing.

Part Four - Warriors' Words

The company visit the main settlement of the Iron-folk and meet of a band of chosen Dunlending warriors, who suspect their talk of truce and seek to bring the truth out with insulting challenges.

Part Five - The Chieftain and the Barrow-witch

The Dunlending chieftain hears the company's proposal and says he must take them to a wise-woman to measure it. The wise-woman surprises everyone by appearing at a feast that very night. She proposes a test: fight a swamp-monster that holds the Dunlendings in thrall.

Part Six - The Grey Horse

The player-heroes face the deadly and cunning swamp-monster. If they slay it, there is a chance for peace with at least one tribe of Dunland.

The Eye of Mordor

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules presented in Rivendell, any revelation episodes occurring during this adventure are likely to revolve around the merciless savagery of the struggle between the Dunlendings and the Men of the Mark, as well as erstwhile allies revealing their treacherous sides.

- Part One -
The Marshal's Command

It is summer and the company has journeyed to Helm's Deep for some reason. Perhaps they are Riders of Westfold already under Éogar's command; maybe they have just delivered a message or completed a mundane errand. They might have spent a Fellowship phase there, in the company of Éogar and his recently rescued wife, Esfled, especially if they participated in her rescue (see *Red Days Rising*).

A runner finds the companions with a message. They are called to a meeting with Éogar in his council-chamber in the Hornburg.

The council-chamber is sparsely furnished with but a few tapestries and a carved wooden table and benches, and there's no forgetting that other hands built it. The stones of the high walls were fashioned and joined with the forgotten skill of Númenor, as smooth and narrow-seamed today as when they were laid in days ancient beyond reckoning.

When the companions arrive, Éogar calls for refreshments for them and then sends servants and counsellors away so he may speak with them privately. Pacing in obvious anger and irritation, he says that a task has fallen to him that involves dealing with the Dunlendings of the West-march of Rohan once again.

Raids and reprisals have increased between them and the Eorlingas of late. A number of chieftains of the Gáesela arose in arms after a confrontation in the West-march turned bloody (either the skirmish described in *Red Days Rising* or another). Some of their warriors have gone so far to cross the river Isen and steal cattle from farms in Rohan. Éogar's Riders have burned Dunlendish villages in the West-march in retribution.

The King's Will

Éogar grows quiet for a moment. Grim-faced, he says that he has received a command from the Lord of the Mark himself: Thengel King has ordered Éogar – of all people! – to offer a truce to the Dunlendings of West-march...

Éogar relates the word of the royal envoy: "Blood only calls for more blood. If peace shall return to the West-march of Rohan, then trade will resume and all raids will cease. The West-march is part of the Mark. This needless strife has been fed for too long."

Éogar clearly finds the idea preposterous, but he is too canny to say that aloud. Instead, he invites the companions to act as his ambassadors – or he simply commands them if they are under his authority.

Why us?

The reasons Éogar chooses the player-heroes are up to the Loremaster. If they worked hard to end the feud between Éogar and Cenric in *Red Days Rising* then he says he knows their willingness to be peacemakers. If they saved his wife, he knows them to be competent. Privately, he may believe they are in Cenric's camp or may resent the favour Thengel shows them and hopes that a debacle in Dunland tarnishes the company's reputation in the King's eyes. An Insight roll might tease out such hidden motivations, or perhaps Riddle but at the risk of earning Éogar's anger without a great success or better on the test..

Where are the Rebels?

There are, in fact, many different clans of "Dunlendings" west of the Gap of Rohan, something the majority of the Rohirrim do not entirely understand. The Second Marshal wants to avoid trouble with the Wulfings of West-march, a powerful folk living closest to the Westfold, so he instructs the ambassadors to cross the Isen at the Fords, and then follow the river west along its north bank and through the Gap of Rohan.

The Dunlendish Gáesela have villages on both sides of the river Isen as it runs west from the Gap, but from the information Éogar has gathered, the rebels who rose up in arms live mainly on the north bank.

If the company have played through the events of *Red Days Rising*, they have met the River-reavers, raiders of the Gáesela that dared to kidnap Éogar's wife and may have fought them. (If their leader Caswelun and his twin sister Rhonwen died during that adventure, then the leader of the rebels is their cousin Boddatun.)

- Part Two -
Beyond the Crossings

In summer, riding from Helm's Deep to the Fords of Isen takes about a day.

On the Westfold Road

A few miles north-west of Grimslade, the companions pass a farm looted a week ago during a Dunlending raid. The heroes may have heard of the raid before, though this would be the first time they see the victims. They notice three farmers tending to a small field and a couple of sickly animals that the raiders left behind. One of the farmers, a wrinkled woman, hails the passing riders. If they answer, she invites them to stop and talk. She is named Earda daughter of Eardfara. Her son and his young wife briefly acknowledge the presence of the companions and continue to work.

Earda offers mead to the travellers and water for their horses. She asks for news from the Hornburg or Edoras. She confirms reports of the raid. They fled away from the house so they suffered no harm, but they lost most of their cattle. When they were done pillaging, the raiders retreated towards the river and hid their tracks.

Earda says that until these latest hostilities began, many farmers regularly traded with the Wulfings and Gáesela alike, including herself. The folk of the West-march may not be rich as the Rohirrim, but they sell good furs and herbs and have always dealt honourably in the past.

Earda's son overhears her mother's talk of trading again with the Dunlendings and interjects, saying that those Hillmen have always been the enemies of the Eorlingas. The only peace they understand is fear, and he hopes that the companions are going there to teach them a lesson.

Earda dismisses the words of her son with a sad smile. She knows her son's anger, he'd rather have revenge upon the thieves than trade with them. But that's because he doesn't understand that those who used to come from the West-march to trade were women and herders, different from those young warriors who crossed the river to plunder. She thinks that common folk like herself want the same things everywhere: peace and trade, healthy children and beasts, and a full harvest. If the companions listen to what Earda has to say and recall it later, they can draw upon a bonus Success die for use during a later encounter with Dunlendings.

The Fords of Isen

The company reaches the Fords of Isen by nightfall. There is still enough light for them to cross the watercourse, and they soon reach the other bank. The western road climbs rapidly, guarded on both sides by ancient earth-forts, built on the top of two low hills (see *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 61).

The old fortifications are not normally manned, but the recent circumstances have led the Second Marshal to send a contingent of Riders to stand watch. They have reinforced the hill-forts surrounding each hill with a tall palisade, interrupted by a stout wooden gate. From here, patrols ride out, a dozen or so Riders at a time, to guard the borderlands and bring back any word of trouble.

Guards at the gate of the southern fort hail the visitors and take them in to see their captain. An **Insight** roll

discerns that many of these Riders are troubled in their hearts while others are hard-eyed. They have done cruel deeds of late. The captain is Léofward, son of Béoward, an impatient and ruthless young man with long unbraided hair and no beard.

Bad Blood

The companions are not obligated to hold forth with Léofward, but if they reveal their mission they will be dragged into an encounter as the angry young leader challenges such a rash idea. He hates the Dunlendings, refusing to distinguish between the different clans and believes them all in league with Orcs.

If the company argue with him, they are entitled to Insight rolls to determine encounter advantages. Any time a companion uses a bonus die, reveal both Léofward's words and the truth behind them. The Tolerance is set to the highest Valour of the company.

The companions may introduce themselves as normal but the young man dismisses their titles and accomplishments, Edoras is far away. Only the mention of Esfled or Éogar will get his respect. He tells all assembled that things were better when Fengel was King and the Eorlingas exacted tribute from the Dunlendings and Riders punished those who refused.

Every attempt at **Courtesy** or **Riddle** will garner scorn and he will twist the heroes' words, trying his best to make the player-heroes hate the Dunlendings as much as he does. Other skills will prompt one of the stories below (the heroes make spend bonus dice or make additional Insight rolls to learnt the truth behind Léofward's words). If the heroes exceed Tolerance, he is insulted that they doubt his words and sends them on their way in anger.

- Léofward says that everyone knows the Dunlendings kill their prisoners in bloody rituals in the dark of the moon. (In truth he doesn't know anyone who has seen it happen, but no one can convince him otherwise.)

- He says the Dunlendings give their children to Orcs. That makes them no better than Orcs themselves – worse, even! He saw with his own eyes Dunlending children running amid an Orc band not long ago. They fled into a swamp together to escape the Riders. (In truth he didn't see whether the children's hands were bound or whether they were willing to be there, only that they were surrounded by Orcs.)

- He says that no Dunlending will make peace, and they won't submit to the King's law either. A few weeks ago, in retaliation for their raiding, his Riders attacked two of their villages, putting their houses to the torch on Éogar's command. He has no idea if the burnt villages were where the brigands came from, nor does he care. "They're all raiders, what does it matter?" is his reply. They slew those who confronted them, and the rest scattered into the swamps and woods, swearing vengeance in their screeching tongue.

If the player-heroes plan to go on with the mission in earnest, Léofward unconvincingly wishes them well and offers to let them camp in the outpost a night or two until they are ready to set out.

The Red Moor

If they ask Léofward or any other Rider, the player-heroes learn that the rebel Dunlendings live in a wooded, swampy waste along the river they call the Red Moor, for the colour of its muddy ground.

Tracks and trails are few and brief there, and it is easy to get lost. Even following the river is not much use, since one must sometimes ride far inland to stay on firm ground. The nearest village is barely 15 miles away, but it may take longer to find it in such a tangled land.

Jouneys in the Red Moor

The next part of the adventure follows the heroes as they explore the swampy Red Moor, searching for the Dunlending rebels. The villages of the Gaesela in this area are very close to each other, but the lack of clear trails and paths makes it difficult for outsiders to find their way around easily. For this reason, finding each village in the Red Moor is a matter of exploration, rather than something to be resolved using the usual rules for journeys.

- Part Three -
Into the Red Moor

If the player-heroes got directions from Léofward at the outpost, they reach the first Dunlendish village at the end of the day. Otherwise, they will be in for a tougher time, for the river bank is broken up here and there with bogs and trackless woods that make travel exhausting.

To navigate the Red Moor without directions and find each village, the huntsmen and scouts of the company must pass a prolonged action requiring 4 successful rolls. Each acting hero is allowed to make two skill rolls each day, using either **Hunting**, **Explore** or **Search**. Each failure gains a hero a point of Fatigue; failing producing an eye results in a Success die's worth of Fatigue.

The First Village

The nearest Dunlendish village is a gathering of crude houses on a broad river bank of red mud. The houses were built in the style of the river Dunlendings, in wood and propped up on stilts against flooding. Now the village is burnt and abandoned. Bodies still lie amongst the ruins, mutilated, and despoiled.

Characters that choose to search the ruins and inspect the insides of several of the burnt buildings have to pass a Corruption test or gain 1 Shadow point due to Anguish. Whether they succeed or fail, they find Orc-arrows, jagged and black, lodge in several bodies, including those of children.

What Happened Here?

A group of Eorlings attacked the village in reprisal. After the attack, its people returned and began to rebuild. But a week later, Orc-raiders came upon them by night, and they were too weak to offer any resistance. The Orc-raid happened at least a week ago, maybe two. The raiders are long gone. There are no clear trails leading to the next village. (The company's Scouts must accomplish a prolonged action to find it, as before.)

The Second Village

The next village is another collection of huts and houses on the north bank of the River Isen. It too is desolate, burnt by the Riders and not yet rebuilt, and at first it seems just as empty but for the barking of a dog. A successful **Awareness** or **Search** roll among the ruins finds a child of about eight years, with scruffy dark hair and tattered clothing, trying to hide behind a pile of freshly-cut timber. He is clearly frightened, and the companions can attempt to bring him out by showing they mean no harm with a suitable roll or the use of applicable Traits.

If they succeed, the child speaks to them using a stilted form of the common speech. His name is Mornun. He

says he hid in the swamp with his family when the Riders attacked, but they returned to the village when his mother became ill a few days ago: Unfortunately, the village wise-woman, their best healer, was nowhere to be found. His father is now away fishing and gathering firewood and herbs, but his mother is resting in what remains of their house. The companions can find the child's home easily, following him. It is still standing and is not as badly burnt as most. Its timbers are carved with spirals, swirling patterns and images of every kind of water-bird.

Inside, the child's mother lies pale and feverish, a thin, dark-haired woman aged by hardship. She smiles seeing the intruders, lost in dreamy delirium.

"Have you brought my daughter back to me? The woodkin lured her away with trinkets and deceits. Poor, playful girl."

The child says that his little sister was stolen by the 'woodkin' the night before, when everyone was asleep. He says they are known to come and steal children, keeping them alive for reasons nobody knows. With a little inquiry, the companions may readily discover that the 'woodkin' must be Goblins or Orcs.

After an hour or two, Mornun's father Comlar, returns. A short, wiry fisherman, he is angry and terrified to see enemies in his home. The companions can try to calm him using appropriate skills, but having attempted to help his wife in his absence sets him more at ease. Comlar remains highly cautious around Riders and if any of the company comes from another people, he favours talking to them.

Lore of the Iron-folk

If the companions help Mornun's family, they learn from them that the Dunlendings are not all the same, and that the burnt villages they entered so far and their inhabitants did not take part in the rebellion against the Men of the Mark...

Comlar states (bitterly) that the rebels they are looking for call themselves "the Iron-folk", and that they are a powerful group of warriors, exacting a tribute of food and gold from more peaceful villages, in exchange for their 'protection'. Most villages in the Red Moor pay the tribute, and thus are 'protected' by a chief of the Iron-folk and his men. In turn, each chief answers to the Iron-folk's high chieftain, who sits in their fortified village of Trefa.

Mornun's village was supposed to be protected by the Iron-folk under the command of a brute called Gutun the Singer. Unfortunately, when the Riders attacked the village, Gutun and his men decided that their tribute was not high enough for him to risk his or his warrior's lives, and they left without offering battle. Comlar never thought much of the Iron-folk and now actively despises them. To him, they were cruel men, willing to live off the efforts of other hard-working men like himself, as leeches attached to the belly of a cow.

Comlar has no great love for the Rohirrim, but he has an offer for the company: if they will rescue his daughter Meahrwen, he will give the companions detailed directions on exactly how to reach Trefa, the main village of the Iron-folk which lies to the west, along with what he knows of their ways.

The Woodkin

Mornun's little sister Meahrwen was taken by Goblins the night before.

Mornun says they came in the middle of the night, as they shun the light of day. Their sanctuary, a forest called the Great Black Woods, is about 20 miles from the village, and there are no good paths to follow, so the Goblins may have not have yet made it home in the same night. They probably hid in some cave along the way.

To find the Goblins, the companions must pass a prolonged action, requiring 5 successful rolls. **Hunting** is the most appropriate skill for the task. Each hero can make up to two rolls before nightfall.

If the hunters succeed before nightfall, they track the Goblins to the hollow of a hillside. If they fail, they can keep trying the following day, but the difficulty of the prolonged action increases to TN 16. If they succeed, they find the Goblins in a cave on the outskirts of the Great Black Woods.

Failing on the second day means that the Goblins found sanctuary in the tangle of the dense wood and the child is lost forever.

The Beasts in the Cave

If the companions catch up with the Goblins, they find them seeking sanctuary in the dark of a cave. A large stone slab has been pushed into place from the inside to bar the only opening. Inside, there is an Orc Guard and as many Goblin Archers as heroes. A similar number of Orc Soldiers are there as well. (See *The One Ring Roleplaying Game* for their stats.)

Attacking the Cave

Shoving the slab out of the way makes a great deal of noise, as the stone thumps against a log that the Goblins have propped against it. When the log is finally dislodged, the slab falls inward with a slam. This warns the Goblins and grants them the initiative in any ensuing fight (unless the companions attempt to be stealthy and propose a way to carefully remove the slab from the opening). If the Goblins are aware of their arrival, the player-heroes face an opening volley but may not launch one of their own; the cave is too dark to aim.

Companions fighting in the cave cannot see until their eyes adjust to the gloom, and the tunnel is cramped: the heroes are considered to be *severely hindered* (TN +4) for the first round of combat and *moderately hindered* (TN +2) for the second. From the third round onwards, there is no penalty.

Waiting for the Goblins

If the player-heroes bide their time until nightfall, they eventually see the slab fall inward and the Goblins file warily out. Two of them carry whimpering Meahrwen tied to a stick between them. The player-heroes may attempt an ambush. The Goblins fight hard to keep their prey, but when half of them have fallen, they drop her and attempt to flee.

Saving the Child

Should the player-heroes eventually triumph against their adversaries, they find little Meahrwen tied with ropes and bundled in a dirty and tattered blanket. She is very weak and frightened, but alive. If the companions return Meahrwen to her family alive, they also save her mother, as having her child brought back to her brings her back from her delirium and she starts to rapidly improve. All characters can remove a point of Shadow.

Comlar does as promised, giving the company precise directions along with some information on whatever Chieftain leads the Iron-folk that grants 1 bonus Success die on interacting with them.

The Great Black Woods

The Great Black Woods are home to the Woodkin, a band of Goblins, led by an Orc-Chieftain. Away from the eyes of Dunlendings and Men of the Mark alike, they survive offering living sacrifices to a half-rotten, half-awake tree-thing.

If the player-heroes venture into the Great Black Woods, play out the exploration. It's a blighted place, heavy with Shadow. The Woodkin know it all too well. They avoid direct combat but lure strangers into deadfalls and traps where the powders of bursting fungus poison mind and body. When the intruders are weakest the Goblins close in. The Great Black Woods are meant to be a threat that the player-heroes should be glad to avoid and perhaps face another day...

- Part Four -
Warriors' Words

If the companions got detailed directions to find Trefa, the main village of the Iron-folk, it takes about two days to get there. If not, the huntsmen and scouts of the company must pass another prolonged action requiring 4 successful rolls; Once again, each acting hero is allowed to make two skill rolls each day, using either **Hunting**, **Explore** or **Search**. Failing a roll gains a hero a point of Fatigue, as they wander through hills, woods, bogs and heavy mists. Failing with an gains them a Success die's worth of Fatigue.

The village of Trefa sprawls around a broad, low hill, standing beside the foggy river. Atop the hill, an earthen rampart reinforced with a wooden palisade protects the heart of the town. A square wooden tower rises above the palisade and the surrounding buildings. Cottages stand along the riverside around the foot of the hill on either side. Fishing-boats ply the water.

This village has clearly escaped the wrath of the Riders of the Mark, as its houses and walls are untouched by flame or stone.

The Welcoming-Party

At the outskirts of Trefa, the first villagers to see the player-heroes drop everything and run howling toward the hill, fearing a raid. The whole village is aroused in a matter of minutes, as a bell starts clanging in the tower atop the hill.

At the foot of the hill, a party of a half a dozen wild-looking Iron-folk warriors on foot gather, making ready for a fight. Many other men with bows now line the top of the tall palisade. The warriors stand their ground, waiting for the companions to close within range of the bowmen on the hilltop. They wear light armour and helms, and carry tall shields and a variety of arms. Most wear boar-skins and have boar crests carved into their helms. One wears bear skins and a bear-carved helm instead. Another has wolf-skins and a wolf-helm.

They are all on foot. They expect an honourable foe to dismount and face them. If confronted by mounted opponents, they will happily attack a mounted foe's horse to even the match.

An Uncommon Parley

Convincing the Iron-folk warriors to let the player-heroes speak to the chieftain doesn't take an encounter or skill rolls – only patience. For as much as the Iron-folk warriors would love to fight the intruders, they don't just attack them out of hand: Their chief has said to find out what the visitors want – and to goad them enough to keep them off-balance and trick the truth out of them. To accomplish their appointed task, the warriors challenge the strangers' honesty and courage until they either start fighting or they are certain why they have come. If the companions stand up to the teasing and taunting with dignity, then eventually they will win through. The Dunlendings will challenge the player-heroes three times before acceding they clearly have something to say...

The Challenges

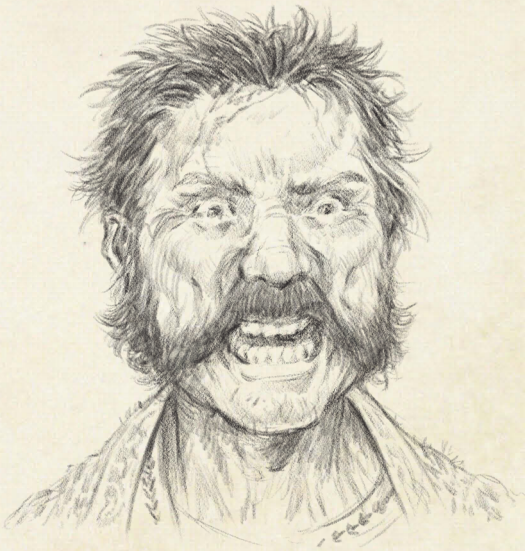
The bear-helmed warrior, a hulking brute called Cavarun the Giant, starts by asking with a smile: *"What do you want here, little horse-folk?"* (If the companions are not all Riders, Cavarun improvises a different insulting epithet.)

Each following challenge is meant to deliberately insult and goad the player-heroes. A player-hero can try to turn the insult around and make the Dunlending speaker look foolish with a successful **Riddle** or **Awe** roll, or they can make a mocking **Song** roll. Only one attempt by a single player-hero can be made for each challenge; if it succeeds, the Iron-folk warriors laugh good-naturedly at whichever of them was rebuked.

Here are some of the challenges the Iron-folk might make, depending on how the companions reply:

A Truce: The warriors look surprised and openly sceptical if the company announce they seek a truce. Cavarun provocatively says it's not like the sons of mighty Eorl to ride this far just to tell clearly preposterous lies. Why not step forward instead and let him claim one of their heads?

Messengers from the King: If the player-heroes say their king sent them, another one, Gutun the Singer, says they have a king who won't fight his own fights, nor make his own peace. How can they trust such a king's words coming from someone else's mouth?



Worthy of Hearing: Logwhen of the Graves, a female warrior, says their chieftain can't speak to the player-heroes because none of the player-heroes is important enough. Have they even earned names other than what their parents gave them as infants? They should go home to their milk and cream. Which of them has enough honour to speak for their faraway king?

Shaming Gutun the Singer

The player-heroes may have recently heard of Gutun the Singer as the chief who left villagers he was meant to protect to fend for themselves. That is not the story he told here in Trefa; he said he and his warriors escaped after leading his warband into the safety of the wild and then hitting the forgoil from ambush a time or two for diversion. The player-heroes can earn a lot of goodwill if they convincingly call Gutun on his lies and say they helped what few villagers remained themselves. The other warriors laugh at Gutun – not for avoiding combat with forgoil who outnumbered him, but for getting caught lying about it. This reduces the number of their challenges by one, but Gutun shuts up for the rest of the encounter to plot bloody vengeance instead... (See *Gutun's Grudge*, page 58.)

If there is a Fight

If the parley degenerates into a fight, the Dunlendings leave it to one-on-one duels if the companions allow it.

An Iron-folk warrior who defeats a player-hero slays them in a coup de grâce the next round – cutting off the character's head for a prize – unless the others interfere. Interfering in a single combat outrages the Iron-folk and turns the whole thing into a grudge-fuelled melee. If the player-heroes take the trouble to spare defeated foes, the other warriors disapprove. They think that means the player-hero plans to keep the foe as a thrall, and they say that a true warrior won't put up with thralldom. Better to kill them now, cleanly. If the player-hero makes it clear that they are letting the defeated opponent live and go free, the Dunlendings are very surprised and entirely unsure how to respond.

Chosen Dunlending Warriors

These picked men and women carry fine weapons and wear golden torcs to mark their status. They carry taller, stouter shields than most Dunlending fighters. The mightiest of them, Cavarun the Giant, has 5 Hate and the additional special abilities *Hideous Toughness* and *Horrible Strength*.

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	**Hate**
16	3
Parry	**Armour**
4 + 3 (great shield)	2d+4 (leather corslet and helm)
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 3
Movement, 3	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Axe	3
Spear	3
Sword	3
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
Snake-like Speed*	-

*Snake-like Speed: When a hero has rolled an attack against this warrior, reduce the warrior's Hate score by 1 to double his or her basic Parry rating, not including the Parry bonus of a shield. If the TN to hit the warrior is now higher than the attack roll, the attack missed.

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Cavarun the Giant – great axe with no shield	9	9	20	Break shield
Gutun the Singer – sword	5	10	16	Disarm
Logwhen of the Graves – spear	5	9	14	Pierce
Wesun Wolfsblood – great spear with no shield	9	9	16	Pierce
Cartartun Bear-shield – spear	5	9	14	Pierce
Vecodorun Mad-mouth – axe	5	8	18	Break shield
Lonely Onwen – spear	5	9	14	Pierce
All – dagger	3	8	12	-

The Chieftain Speaks

After the player-heroes finish all their fighting, or after one of them defeats a warrior without killing them and without taking the warrior as a thrall, or if the player-heroes navigate all the warriors' challenges peacefully, the Iron-folk chieftain finally shows his face.

The chieftain is likely Caswelun, the Dunlending raider who dared kidnap the wife of a Marshal of the Mark. (If the company slew Caswelun while rescuing Esfled in *Red Days Rising* it may be his sister Rhonwen or their cousin Boddatun instead.)

He leans out over the top of the palisade near the gate and calls cheerfully down: *"Cavarun, someone just told me the King of the Horse-lords has sent an envoy. You shouldn't keep a great king's people waiting! Send them up!"*

By the time the gate opens, the chieftain has returned to his tower.

Beyond the Wall

Through the gate the path rises to a wide yard. Nearest the chieftain's tower are horse-yards and stables. The chieftain's best warriors have houses scattered around town. The chosen warriors' houses are the largest and most distinctive. If those warriors escort the player-heroes in, they proudly point out their own homes. Each has a pole on either side of the door where heads are impaled, one stacked atop the other. Those at the bottom are oldest, the skulls of great enemies defeated by the warriors or their forefathers. Those at the top are newest, some a few only weeks old. Three are the heads of Orcs large and brave enough to be worth taking. One at Wesun Wolfsblood's house is the head of a massive wolf; he claims it is a Warg's, vicious and intelligent as any man. Finally, one of the freshest at Cavarun's house is the head of a Rohan warrior (perhaps someone known to the player-heroes?).

The warriors watch for the player-heroes' reactions to the heads. They know the Rohirrim might be squeamish about it, since they don't have enough sense to take heads of their own. If asked about their grim custom, one of the warriors explains that the Dunlendings learned the secret of taking heads long ago. Every head taken from a vanquished enemy makes that enemy your thrall in death, just as keeping him alive makes him your slave in life. Slaves lurk in the shadows inside the chosen warriors' houses, thralls taken from rival tribes. Some of the warriors have wives and children watching from the thresholds.

Pits and Stones

Near the centre of the village, in the shadow of the wooden tower, is an open space where three tall standing stones loom over six wells. The standing stones and the stones of the wells are carved intricately with spirals and curving designs. Some of the standing stones are carved in designs reminiscent of trees. A successful **Awareness** will note that the villagers only draw water from three of the wells. If a hero inspects more closely, they will catch a whiff of corruption from the pits. At the bottom of each, barely seen in the sunlight, lies silver, gold, swords, and human dead given recently in sacrifice.

If the player-heroes ask for an explanation, the Iron-folk say they have recently gone back to the "old ways", to build up their strength against the raids of the Men of the

Mark and the attacks that followed by Orcs. Some of the Iron-folk seem unhappy with such cruel measures and are clearly reluctant to discuss it. Others are hardened enough to laugh about it.

- Part Five - The Chieftain and the Barrow-witch

The chieftain's square wooden tower has two levels and a roof where guards stand watch. The posts are all intricately carved with the sigils and designs of the Iron-folk. Up a few stairs from the ground and through a stout door the player-heroes enter the great hall. It is built around a long hearth where many cauldrons hang and a few fires burn. Tables and benches surround the hearth. The chieftain's chair sits on a dais at the far end. The heads of fallen enemies hang from some posts, never more nor fewer than three to a post. Here in the great hall the player-heroes meet the chieftain of the Iron-folk tribe, sitting on his or her throne.

A Dunlendish Great Hall

Similarly to the great houses of the Mark, a Dunlendish great hall is inhabited by all those warriors who don't have houses of their own. Guests of the chieftain sleep in the great hall too, as do the chieftain's preferred slaves. The chieftain and his family sleep here in winter, when it's too cold to sleep upstairs. The hall is surrounded by little side rooms with kitchens, storage-rooms, and workshops. The ceiling above the hearth is open to the upper level and to the sky above. Stairs lead up from the great hall to the chieftain's chambers, a large room where the chieftain sleeps (and his family if he has one) with side rooms for slaves and storage. The floor at the middle of the upper level is open to the heat and smells of the hearth below; above that the ceiling is open to the sky. Stairs lead up from the chieftain's chambers to the roof, where guards keep watch on the surrounding land. The middle of it is open to the hearth far below so smoke and smells billow up.

Which Chieftain?

The adventure assumes the chieftain is Caswelun, who attempted to abduct Esfled in *Red Days Rising*.

He is clever and slippery, reckless and charismatic, always ready to laugh. He is not the mightiest warrior of his tribe but the mightiest warriors all love him.

Rhonwen, twin sister of Caswelun and co-chieftain of the tribe if she yet lives, doesn't reside in Trefa. She is not part of the action now, unless somehow Caswelun died and she survived *Red Days Rising*. In that case she is chieftain, stern and wary.

If both are dead then the chieftain is their cousin Boddatun, a tested warrior with a little less of Caswelun's dash but a little more of Rhonwen's steadiness.

Hospitality

The chieftain extends his hospitality to the player-heroes. He says they will sleep in safety in his hall and their horses will be fed and cleaned and kept warm in his stables. This is not idle talk: an **Insight** roll can tell the chieftain takes an offer of hospitality with absolute seriousness and wouldn't dream of betraying it.

The chieftain takes special interest in how the player-heroes responded to the challenges of his warriors outside. He compliments them for moments of special courage and wit. If asked, he admits that he told his warriors to do their best to get the intruders to draw swords. If that was their intent all along, after all, better to do it outside the walls.

Eventually the chieftain asks the visitors what they have come for. He hears them and speaks his mind, but he is careful not to make an immediate decision.

If the player-heroes say they come to offer a truce, the chieftain questions them closely. How were they charged with bringing this offer? What did their King say? What did the King's marshal say? What do the warriors of the Riddermark say? He asks many versions of the same key questions, trying to discern whether agreeing to a truce now will only weaken him for more Eorlings raids to come.

Set Tolerance

The chieftain sifts the visitors' words for warlike intent, not their actions, so the base Tolerance is set equal to the highest Wisdom value amongst the companions. Increase the Tolerance by 1 if they helped the Dunlending family in the burnt village. Add 1 if they say that farmers of Westfold hope to trade in peace.

Interaction

The player-heroes can lend weight to their words with **Awe**; they may have established their importance facing the warriors outside, but the chieftain is happy to let them remind onlookers that he deals with important folk. **Courtesy** can help prove their friendly intent despite recent violence. **Song** has no place in such a negotiation.

Other skill rolls such as **Persuade** can convince the chieftain. But he wants many things.

The chieftain is interested in an alliance: not just peace but obligations on both sides. He wants the player-heroes to promise to make the case for one to their king. The Iron-folk need security: The fierce Hillfolk of the Dunland Fells grow stronger every year, and he fears they will soon reach south across the miles to conquer and steal what they now gain in trade. Would an alliance mean the Riders in their outposts would help protect the Iron-folk from the Hillfolk of the Fells? The Goblins of the Great Black Woods grow bolder, too, but they are few compared to the Hillfolk of Dunland.

For his own part, the chieftain covets status. He says he needs a wife. His marrying a "great lady" of the Riddermark would seal their alliance with the bonds of blood. But the player-heroes must promise him someone whose agreement they can secure, such as one of their own kin. Of course, any player-hero of Rohan knows that a family marrying one of its own off to a Dunlending chieftain, even one from the West-march, would mar their reputation.

The chieftain also needs gold. What great leader doesn't?

The Chieftain's Decision

However things go – whether the chieftain leans toward truce or against – he says he cannot make such an important decision swiftly. The tribe's wise-woman must measure the worth of the offer of peace. Tomorrow he shall take the visitors to hear her advice.

The chieftain's eventual decision is determined by how many successes the company accrue. The more successes they roll before the Tolerance is exceeded, the more swayed he is by their negotiation.

0: The chieftain is unwilling to agree to a truce. He is more likely to ally with other Dunlendings against the Eorlingas unless the wise-woman convinces him otherwise.

1: The chieftain plans to agree to a truce only if the player-heroes offer him a marriage, at least 24 points of Treasure, and agree that they will propose an alliance to their king.

2-4: The chieftain plans to agree if they offer two of the things he wants: marriage, Treasure, or an alliance.

5-6: The chieftain plans to agree if they offer one of the things he wants: marriage, Treasure, or an alliance.

7+: The chieftain plans to agree even if they offer none of the things he wants.

But tonight, a feast!

About the Barrow-witch

The chieftain says the Iron-folk bring their wise-woman gifts and sacrifices, and she brings them the wisdom of the spirits of the earth in return. She lives in an old barrow near the Silver Mere, half a day's journey to the west. The chieftain warns that every person who comes to her must bring a gift or risk ill-luck for all.

As the chieftain talks of the Barrow-witch and the Silver Mere, an **Insight** roll senses unease in the hall. There is no sense of treachery, more of a generalised, superstitious dread. None of the Iron-folk admit or explain it.

The Feast

Since the chieftain is unmarried, his mother is responsible for the feast. The best warriors of the tribe come with their wives and children. Much food is brought to the tables, so much that the feast could be described as 'lavish' even for Men of the Mark. There is seemingly endless ale, stews of fish, carrots and onions bubble in cauldrons. A boar roasts in the middle of the long hearth, but it goes untouched and the Dunlendings glare and warn off any player-hero who goes near it. It is being roasted for a special purpose.

The Iron-folk all drink heartily, men and women and children. They tell stories and sing songs. The greatest Iron-folk warriors raise their own voices loudly to sing in their own honour, boasting of exploits to put past heroes and each other to shame. Sometimes those songs are entertaining enough that others join in. Other times the laughter is more mocking. They encourage the visitors to sing their own songs and tell their own stories. **Song**, **Riddle** and **Awe** all can make good impressions. Failure means the player-hero is laughed down.

The Hero's Portion

Eventually the mother of the chieftain brings daggers to carve the boar in great pomp. She serves a great cut from it to the chieftain and loudly calls it the "Hero's Portion." A slightly lesser cut goes to the best of the chieftain's warriors (Cavarun the Giant if he is still alive); somewhat more modest cuts to the other chosen warriors. If a player-hero bested one of them in combat, that player-hero gets a Hero's Portion, too. All other companions get decent lesser cuts as a sign of respect.

Gutun's Grudge

If the companions shamed Gutun the Singer, he tries to goad the weakest-looking of them (going by Valour, Body and Heart in that order) into violating the chieftain's hospitality. Gutun singles that player-hero out in songs that make fun of some particular feature or fact that everyone knows, or he may just make up insulting facts.

If the targeted hero accepts the challenge, it can be solved as an opposed action (see *The One Ring*, page 148), with Gutun rolling 3 dice for Song and the player answering choosing an appropriate skill – Song to answer in rhyme, Riddle to twist Gutun's words in a cunning way, or even Courtesy or Lore.

If the hero wins the challenge Gutun leaves the hall. Should the Dunlending win though, he doesn't stop to savour his victory, but continues to pile abuse upon the companion. Left without means to answer by the defeat, the hero can either leave the hall, or resort to violence to silence the insolent warrior.

Of course, this is what Gutun is looking for: baring a knife or sword in the hall will make the hero fair game for slaying and outlawry. That may be a good moment for the wise-woman to arrive and distract everyone...

The Barrow-witch

Late into the feast there's a murmur and hush of surprise. The Barrow-witch has come, unannounced.

The Barrow-witch is a strange and frightful old woman with wild eyes, wrapped in ragged black robes and dishelleved hair. Amulets made of animal tusks and fangs, human teeth, and many-coloured stones are draped out her neck, and hang from her wrists. She is the last of a lost people, her true name long forgotten. She says in a reedy voice:

"Yes, I have come to the Iron-folk. Why so daunted? Have you forgotten how to be thankful?"

The chieftain belatedly tells his mother to bring a seat for the Barrow-witch, and meat and bread and drink, and gifts of silver and gold to lighten her darkness. As the Barrow-witch sits and eats, she reminds everyone that without her, their sacrifices would only placate the cruel spirits of water and earth, and not always do that much. Only she can draw wisdom from the voices who speak to her from the barrow.

If the companions did not ask the Iron-folk about the Barrow-witch before, they can certainly do so now.

If the player-heroes ask the Barrow-witch about the voices of the barrow, she says they sing to her of birth and life and death; of sickness and healing and health; of hope and hatred and despair; of water and earth and sky. She won't give more detail than that.

Three Deaths or None

After a while, the Barrow-witch sings that she sees three deaths for the Iron-folk:

- Death by the White Hand of the hillfolk.
- Death by the White Horse of the plains.
- Death by the Grey Horse of the fens.

But then she sings of hope:

- Three deaths become two if the Iron-folk call the White Horse their brother.
- Two deaths becomes one if the White Horse and the Iron-folk stand together against the White Hand.
- One last death becomes none if the White Horse brings that death to the Grey Horse.

Three deaths for the Iron-folk, or none.

Even more than that, she states that she knows many among the Iron-folk dislike the sacrifices they must make to the old spirits of earth and water, to face their many enemies. She declares that if the "three deaths become none", then the Iron-folk need no longer sacrifice slaves and children to the spirits... or to the Grey Horse.

The choice is not for the Iron-folk alone, for only those of the White Horse can slay the Grey. She looks to any Riders of Rohan among the company. The Iron-folk watch as well.

The Grey Horse and the Silver Mere

At the mention of the Grey Horse, it does not take an **Insight** roll to know that the Iron-folk are immediately frightened. The wise-woman states that the Grey Horse has long held the Iron-folk in thrall.

"It lives in the fens of the Silver Mere, demanding sacrifices of the Iron-folk – gold, living victims, men, women, children... it matters not. Sacrifices to keep its peace. The Iron-folk cannot oppose it and they cannot flee, for an ancient doom was laid upon them, long ago. To defy the Grey Horse will bring death to them all. But you are not of the Iron-folk... your are foreigners, the Swift folk of Eorl and their doom is not yours. Are not the Eorlingas the masters of horses? You can destroy the Grey Horse, if your courage holds. You can free the Iron-folk."

If they Agree

If the company offers to slay the Grey Horse, the stunned crowd cheers them. The chieftain says that if the *forgoil* rid them of it, then they will have the friendship of the Iron-folk forever and he'll forego any conditions on an alliance.

If they Decline

If the company declines to go after the Grey Horse, the Dunlendings don't hold it against them. They live in terror of the monster themselves. The Iron-folk chieftain stands by whatever they negotiated previously. (see page 57).

The Iron-Folk's Oath

If the companions offered to help, the wise-woman says they have pleased her. She turns to the crowd and warns that the defeat of the Grey Horse will save the Iron-folk only if the Iron-folk swear by it.

The Iron-folk must be bound to the Eorlings' effort. The doom that would have befallen the Iron-folk for attacking the Grey Horse will fall upon them if they betray the trust of the Horse Folk.

There's a great deal of murmuring, but the chieftain says he'll swear and the Iron-folk eventually agree. She chants:

Iron-folk sing
in horse-lords' hearing
the barrow-woman's song:

Oaths here you swear;
honour you swear;
brotherhood swear

to horse-masters' kingdom
in peace and in war
when fen-rider falls.

Mighty words bind you:
doom here you gain
for doombearer slain.

The Iron-folk follow along: *"Oaths here we swear, honour we swear...when fen-rider falls."*

The wise-woman is pleased. She tells the player-heroes to come to her barrow in the morning. She will give them wisdom and blessings to face their foe. It must be in the morning and it must be at her home, not in a feast's merriment with night outside.

She shuffles out, refusing all aid, and soon is lost to the night.

Abandoning the Mission

What if the player-heroes, seeing signs of human sacrifice and witchcraft, decide they've had enough and refuse to work with the Iron-folk? The Iron-folk chieftain maintains his hospitality until they leave his walled town, but he quietly sends warriors out to lay snares on the muddy road just outside town.

Each player-hero riding a horse on the road can attempt an **Awareness** test to spot the snares in time to react. Success means the player-hero can avoid them with an **Athletics** test. Failure means the **Athletics** test requires a great success. If a snare bites, it brings the horse down with a wound (see *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 138).

Moreover, the chosen Iron-folk warriors lead a raiding-party – each has one ordinary Dunlending warrior (see Dunlending Raiders on page 118 of *Horse-lords of Rohan*) and one of the chosen warriors (see page 54) per player-hero – on horseback in pursuit.

If the player-heroes escape, skip to the **Aftermath** (page 65).

- Part Six -
The Grey Horse

The chieftain sends an escort to guide the player-heroes to the wise-woman's barrow, one chosen warrior for each of them. If possible, it is the same band that they met at Trefa's gates (but not Gutun the Singer). It is about half a day's ride or walk from Trefa to the barrow; the ground is uneven enough that riding doesn't gain any speed. The warriors ride their own horses alongside those of the player-heroes.

The player-heroes might want to find out whether the escorts have secret plans with an **Insight** or **Riddle** roll. Success discerns that they likely plan to finish off the player-heroes if things go poorly with the Grey Horse.

But if the player-heroes defeat the Grey Horse, they will embrace them as brethren after.

The barrow is an overgrown hillock standing on the borders of the Silver Mere. Beyond it the land sprawls in a broad fen, still and silvery, stinking of rot. Willows and reeds stand drooping here and there in the water. The fen looks quite shallow, only two or three feet deep, but the Iron-folk caution against trusting a swamp without need. Their escorts say, in instinctively low voices, that the Grey Horse lurks another few miles onward around the shore.

When they finally reach the hillock, the companions dismount and climb a short way to reach the barrow's entrance. There is no door to bar the way, and the heroes enter a narrow corridor that winds around and around in a spiral before it reaches the barrow's centre. There, the witch waits, stirring a cauldron, her face twisted by the shadows cast by the ruddy fire beneath it. Smoke from the fire filters up through stones and peat and out into the mists, unseen.

The Barrow-witch welcomes the player-heroes. She says they are brave to offer to fight for the Iron-folk. She says if they defeat the Grey Horse, she will teach the Iron-folk new songs to always remember their new oath. And she will make sure they stop making bloody sacrifices in their holy wells. Strength and courage will be enough if they have stout allies.

The Barrow-witch's Price

The Barrow-witch tells the Iron-folk escort to wait nearby and gathers the company about her cauldron, for the time has come to speak of the Grey Horse.

"It rises with the fog, rides along the water, and carries its prizes off into the depths. The Silver Mere sings of its wonder and glory, for the Grey Horse and the Silver Mere are one. It cannot be held with ropes, like the horses of your grasslands. Only a song of water and earth can charm or bind such a creature and even then, not for long."

The Barrow-witch never explicitly says just what the Grey Horse is. It is part of the mere, or the mere is part of it. It has ridden the waters hungrily since the Dark Days, before memory, which only the dreams of the dead remember.

She tells the company how to find the Grey Horse: follow the shore of the mere three miles farther. There a strand stretches out across the water, forming a lagoon shrouded in willows on either side. The Iron-folk walk to the end of that strand to leave their "gifts" for the Grey Horse. It can be drawn to the end of the strand or to the lagoon with a water-song to soothe and befuddle its senses; or it will soon come to them if they but wait.

She says it is safe enough for horses on the shore, and even in the shallow water – usually.

Now that they know something of what they face, would they have her aid to face it?

The rest of the conversation with the wise-woman is resolved as an encounter, though no Introduction is needed.

Determining Tolerance

Only Wisdom matters to the wise-woman. The highest Wisdom amidst the company is the base Tolerance.

Interaction

The wise-woman is inclined to help the companions, for her own reasons, but she will not make it easy. Old habits and how she likes to be perceived means it will take some persuasion to coax her into offering her assistance. She requires either an exchange of knowledge or riches for her support. How much help she offers up is assessed by the total number of successes gained while negotiating for her assistance.

- An offer of 2 to 5 Treasure allows each companion to make a **Persuade** roll.
- An offer of 6 to 9 Treasure gives a bonus Success die to the **Persuade** roll.
- An offer of 10 Treasure or more automatically adds 2 successes to the encounter total.
- Offering to teach her some of the songs of the Rohirrim allows each companion to make a **Song** roll.
- Offering to teach her some of the songs particular to the company (see *Rivendell*, page 23): allows a **Song** roll with a bonus Success die.
- Offering to teach her riddles from the heroes' folks allows each companion to make a **Riddle** roll.

Compare the total successes rolled to the entries below.

1. (Narrow Success): She warns the company of the dangers of the Silver Mere, saying *"It will tempt you. Listen, but be wary."*

2-4. (Success): She offers to teach her songs to the willing. See the box *"Songs of the Wise-woman"*.

5+. (Great Success): She gives the party a strange shaped flute carved from bone. *"To ward off the Grey Horse's terrible song."* As long as a companion rolls **Song** each round to play the flute during combat, the Grey Horse's *Thing of Terror* Special Ability will not work on listeners; however, player must be close to the fight and concentrating, thus fighting in an Open stance; moreover, the Grey Horse will attack the flute-bearer in preference to other targets.

Songs of the Wise-woman

The wise-woman will teach each player-hero a song of the earth to bind and hold the Grey Horse, or a song of the water to lure it, if they want it. Into the companion's ear she sings the secret name of some forgotten power of the earth or the water: a water-song or an earth-song.

- Each pupil automatically gains a point of Shadow for each song learned. The songs of the wise-woman are explained on the next page, they have no effect away from the Silver Mere.

Confronting the Wise-woman

If the company fails to gain any success, or refuses to bargain with her, she curtly dismisses them from her hut with a grim laugh and a "give my regards to the Grey Horse." An **Insight** roll against TN 18 deems that the wise-woman's assistance has nothing to do with goodwill. In fact, the wise-woman believes that if the death of the Grey Horse will free some of its power, which she can gather to herself. She may be entirely mad, but perhaps not...

What if the player-heroes decide to slay the old villain? She is a crone, easy prey if they have her in reach (her killing would be considered a *misdeed*, though). But she has power over the earth and water and mist of her home, gained in long years of ugly rituals. She attempts to divert them and flee into the fog, never to be seen by the company again.

The Barrow-witch

Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
12	9
Parry	Armour
5	-
Skills	
Personality, 4	Survival, 3
Movement, 2	Custom, 3
Perception, 3	Vocation, 4
Special Abilities	
Dreadful Spells*	-

**Dark Glamour:* The wise-woman may spend a point of Hate to invoke power over the land and mist of her home, to vanish with unnatural swiftness into the mist, to bewilder an opponent with phantom sounds and smells and half-glimpsed sights, or in a last crisis even to bring the stones and earth of the barrow itself crashing down to bury everyone in it but herself. A collapse of the barrow causes Endurance damage equal to the roll of three Success Dice.

Phantoms in the Fen

The Silver Mere is quiet at first as the player-heroes walk or ride along its shore. At times the shore seems only a strand between two meres, as little as fifty yards across. Along the way, at different times, each player-hero should make a Corruption test. Each player-hero who fails sees or hears something compelling, depending on their Calling.

- **Leader:** Distant shouts come over the water: a group of warriors is under threat and needs help.
- **Scholar:** Hears echoes of a beautiful song laden with meaning in an ancient tongue, just beyond hearing.
- **Slayer:** Smells the scent of a hated foe or a predator hiding nearby.

- **Treasure-hunter:** Sees the unmistakeable glint of silver and gold.
- **Wanderer:** Spots a clear, firm path that leads into the mists where the shape of a tall tower waits.
- **Warden:** Hears the cry of a lost child just out of sight.

A player-hero who refuses to pursue the lure gains a point of Shadow. A player-hero who pursues a lure must roll the player's choice of either **Awareness** or **Explore** to avoid falling into a deep pool.

Drowning in Black Water

Falling into the mere is deadly. A dismounted victim must attempt an **Athletics** roll to climb free, with a difficulty equal to TN 10, plus half the player-hero's present Fatigue. The player-hero can drop held items and remove a shield or helm, losing them forever to the water, to reduce the TN, but has no time to remove armour. For each **Athletics** test they fail, the player-hero loses 5 Endurance points from the struggle. A player-hero who falls unconscious in the water drowns and dies.

A player-hero on horseback must attempt a Riding test at TN 20 (minus the mount's Riding modifier, as usual). If it succeeds the horse swims to safety; if it fails the horse suffers a Wound from drowning. Dismounting allows the horse to swim free but then requires the player-hero to make an Athletics roll as above to swim to safety themselves.

The Grey Horse

Eventually the player-heroes reach the little lagoon that the wise-woman described. Willows droop all around. The dark earth sinks gradually into the shallow mere. A bank stretches out through the mere into the mists, about twenty feet wide. If they walk out onto the strand, eventually it ends with water and fog all around. The lair of the monster is a blighted place, and walking here requires a Corruption test to avoid gaining one point of Shadow.

If the player-heroes wait then the Grey Horse comes in its own time, hours later, seeping from the black water slowly and quietly. Each player-hero must succeed at an **Awareness** roll (TN 12, as presumably they are alert) to avoid being surprised when it strikes (as per the normal rules for an ambush).

A player-hero who sings one of the wise-woman's songs must be near the water – near enough to be attacked when the Grey Horse appears.

A Water-Song to Lure It

Singing the wise-woman's water-song to lure the monster requires a **Song** roll. Each attempt gains the singer one point of Shadow. More than one companion may sing the song at the same time (both roll and gain Shadow).

If the roll succeeds, the hero feels something awaken in the waters, alluring but treacherous. The Grey Horse soon rises up from the water near the singer. The player-heroes have the initiative and an attempt to ambush it while luring it automatically succeeds.

The singer cannot attack when the Grey Horse appears. With a great success at **Song**, the disorientation leaves the Grey Horse Weary for one round; with an extraordinary success the Grey Horse is Weary for two rounds. If an was rolled, the Grey Horse attempts a called shot against the singer as its next action.

An Earth-Song to Bind It

Singing the wise-woman's earth-song requires a **Song** roll. Each attempt gains the singer one point of Shadow. More than one companion may sing the song at the same time (both roll and gain Shadow).

In combat, the earth-song can be sung by a companion in *Open* stance, forfeiting an attack. If the roll succeeds the hero feels some latent power of the earth stirring, greedy and cruel. The Grey Horse cannot attempt to *Escape Combat* for one round; for two rounds with a great success; for three on an extraordinary success. If an was rolled, the Grey Horse attempts a called shot against the singer as its next action.

The Grey Horse Strikes

A long fanged head, resembling nothing so much as that of a dead horse, slime dripping from eye sockets empty but for pale fires burning like the marsh-lights that lead travellers astray, rises from the water first. A long neck,

scaled and slimy, with a mane of rank swamp reeds follows, then nimble claws drag its slippery bulk from the water. Its grey hide seems faintly luminous with an unhealthy light. Mist rises about it. However firm the ground, water splashes beneath it.

The Grey Horse ventures as far ashore as it must to seize its prey. It suffers no harm being away from water.

If it suffers a Wound or is reduced to zero Endurance, the Grey Horse attempts to *Escape Combat* back into the safety of the mere – unless it is halted by the wise-woman's earth-song. Slain, the monster's body swiftly deteriorates into slime as its spirit retreats into the water like fog receding.

The swamp will always be cursed as the monster's spirit lurks in the waters. That makes it a blessing to the wise-woman, who hopes her powers will feed and grow on the corruption.

The Grey Horse

Attribute Level	
8	
Endurance	Hate
96	8
Parry	Armour
6	3d
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 3
Movement, 3	Custom, 0
Perception, 2	Vocation, 0
Weapon Skills	
Bite	4
Special Abilities	
Thing of Terror	Snake-like Speed
Great Size	Seize and Drown*

Seize and Drown: If it attempts a called shot, the Grey Horse seizes the victim in its claws and attempts to *Escape Combat* at the end of the same round. If the Grey Horse successfully *Escapes Combat* it drags the victim into the water. A seized victim cannot attack. At the end of each round the victim may attempt to escape the Grey Horse's grasp by making an **Athletics** roll (TN 20). After breaking free the victim must swim to safety; otherwise the victim drowns as the Grey Horse's glowing eyes watch and gloat. See **Drowning in Black Water** on page 63.

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	7	9	16	Seize and Drown

The Hoard of the Grey Horse

If the Grey Horse is slain, a hero could dive down into the murk seeking what happened to the gold and silver left for the monster by the Iron-folk. Roll the lowest of **Athletics** or **Awareness** against a DC 16.

Failure means nothing is found; if the roll is failed and an eye is rolled, the companion loses 5 Endurance points and begins to drown. A drowning companion must make

a successful **Athletics** roll to escape the mire. Each failure cases a loss of 5 Endurance points.

If the roll was instead a success the swimmer finds a hoard worth 40** Treasure.

The Iron-folk's Gratitude

The company finds that their escort has changed. There is one chosen Iron-folk warrior (see page 54) and one Dunlending Raider (see page 118 of *Horse-lords*) per player-hero, but this time they are led by Gutun the Singer. How the Dunlendings react depends on what the player-heroes have achieved and how they interacted at the chieftain's feast.

If the companions failed to slay the Grey Horse – or if they slew the Grey Horse but they grievously offended the Iron-folk earlier and did not bind them in an oath of alliance – the Iron-folk ambush the player-heroes. If they triumph, the Iron-folk take captives as thralls; if the Grey Horse still lives, they mean to offer them to the Grey Horse as sacrifices to appease it. They take the heads of any slain player-heroes in honour back to Trefa. The company will have to escape as they may.

If the companions slew the Grey Horse and bound the Iron-folk in an oath, or if they didn't bind them in an oath but at least didn't offend them deeply, the Iron-folk seem awed by the feat. Gutun is furious, but also now somewhat frightened of the company. The Iron-folk extend their hands in friendship and guide the company back to Trefa as heroes. When all the companions have recovered, a full escort rides with them back to the Gap of Rohan, along with some small tokens of friendship for Éogar and the King.

– Aftermath –

Thengel King awaits the player-heroes at the Hornburg.

If the company secured the alliance of the Iron-folk, the King praises their achievement – especially if they bested the Grey Horse too. He says many Dunlending tribes are forming alliances with one another, and if that continues then there will be the risk of them uniting under a king who hates the Riddermark.

Having the Iron-folk as allies may not add much to the Mark's strength but it unbalances those shaky alliances and makes that threat less likely. He offers the player-heroes two horses each from his stables appropriate to the player-hero's Standing (see *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 133).

Éogar offers gifts and praise in public, but an **Insight** roll determines he's inwardly furious at peace with the Iron-folk and possibly with the heroes' rising favour with Thengel but he cannot oppose his king's will. He rewards each player-hero with Treasure equal to 2 points plus the sum of the hero's Valour and Standing scores.

If they failed to secure an alliance, Éogar says with some satisfaction that a mad dog always bites the hand of peace. Thengel King is disappointed but not surprised. Hearing of the Iron-folks' submission to evil powers certainly takes away any sting of failure. Unless he thinks the player-heroes deliberately sabotaged the mission, he offers each a horse from his stables as thanks for their efforts.

- Black Horses - Black Deeds

- **When:** This quest could be set during the summer of any year between 2961 and 2970, though it should be set after the events of *Red Days Rising*.

- **Where:** The adventure begins in Edoras, where the company meets with Cenric, Third Marshal of the Riddermark. It then takes them to the village of Stotfold in Eastfold, before crossing the Plains of Rohan towards the Emyn Muil.

- **What:** A band of horse thieves from the south are raiding along the Great West Road. Lives have been lost and many horses have been stolen.

- **Why:** The horse thieves are escaped prisoners from Gondor. They are selling horses to agents from Mordor, who offer especially good prices for black steeds.

- **Who:** The former leader of the brigands, Berevir, is a disgraced captain of Minas Tirith who has been deposed by his more violent and bloodthirsty deputy, Hirdan. Berevir poses as a victim of the brigands in Stotfold and is willing to help root them out.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into seven parts, and it begins and ends in Edoras.

Part One - By Order of the Marshal

The company are called to meet with the Third Marshal of the Riddermark, Cenric. Cenric's men are spread thin and there are reports of a band of brigands and horse thieves operating along the great West Road. The Third Marshal requests that the company investigates.

Part Two - The Village of Stotfold

The company travels to the village of Stotfold, where Berevir of Gondor—a survivor of an outlaw attack—has been found. Though injured, Berevir is determined to be of help in tracking or capturing them. He claims to have knowledge of their leader, a notorious criminal called Hirdan the Cruel. Whether or not the company decides to take Berevir with them, he follows them on his own.

Part Three - Fury in the Darkness

The company discovers that the brigands haven't limited their activities to theft and murder when they come across a barrow that has been recently plundered. Unfortunately for the brigands, their attempts to make off with a long-dead Horse-lord's treasure have awakened his Spectre. One of the thieves is alive, albeit driven mad by the dead man, and could be a valuable source of information... if the company can convince the angry ghost to let him live.

Part Four - Merchants Most Foul

The company encounters two of Cenric's men who have been sent to enlist their aid in recovering half a dozen black horses from a band of unsavoury traders. If the company investigates the merchants, they learn they are servants of Mordor.

Part Five - Turning the Tables

As the company rides to meet the scouts searching for the bandits, a horn rings out and the sounds of battle carry on the breeze. The bandits have set an ambush for the scouts – can the company save them?

Part Six - Sharp Words

The bandits have retreated to an abandoned tower, where the company might choose to parley with them, or attack outright.

Part Seven - Victory and Regret

Berevir admits to his crimes as the bandits' former leader. With this admission, he surrenders himself to the companions to face the King's judgement. If they return him to Edoras, Thengel King listens to their tale and relies on their counsel before passing his final judgement.

The Eye of Mordor

The Rivendell guide presents optional Eye of Mordor rules that require revelation episodes. Such episodes occurring during this adventure may revolve around an unexpected Orc raid or Brigand ambush. Alternatively, revelation episodes may be reserved for later, for example at the *Tower of Grass* (see page 82).

- Part One -
By Order of the Marshal

When the companions meet once more, rumours of trouble in the east have come to Edoras. There are tales of Orcs pillaging villages, and a handful of refugees have even trickled into Edoras. Cenric, Third Marshal of the Riddermark, has committed his men to hunting down and repelling the Orcs, but despite his best attempts, the raids continue across the Anduin.

Angered by the strife in his lands, Cenric is all too aware that some – most notably the Second Marshal, Éogar, will soon question his ability to maintain order. To this end, he has come to Edoras to consult with his king before leaving to personally oversee his easterly redoubts. Cenric's troubles continue to multiply though – word has come to him that a band of brigands from Gondor have been raiding travelling merchants in the Eastfold, murdering good folk, and stealing prized horses.

With too few men spread too wide, Cenric has decided to call upon the company for aid. They may have impressed him in the past (during the events of the *Red Days Rising*) or Thengel King may have quietly recommended them. Whatever his reasons, the Third Marshal decides to enlist the company to deal with the bandits.

Meeting the Marshal

The company might be in Edoras for any number of reasons when they receive a summons from the Third Marshal. Even if they are not, Cenric sends a fast rider to deliver his message, which instructs them to come to Meduseld with all due haste. Whatever the circumstance, Cenric is preparing to leave the Golden Hall when the company is brought to him. His squire works to fasten his armour as he speaks to the companions, and his tone is somewhat rushed and impatient.

Set Tolerance

Under the circumstances, Cenric is more concerned with bravery and skill at arms. The starting Tolerance is

based on the highest Valour rating in the company. Add the highest Standing rating of any Rider of Rohan. If the companions impressed Cenric during *Red Days Rising* – by saving his herds, for example, or successfully getting Éogar to agree to his demands – increase the Tolerance by an additional 1 or even 2. If the company parted on ill terms with Cenric, decrease the Tolerance accordingly – if such is the case, it may be that Cenric has employed the company due to desperation or the King's order...

Introduction

With his squire close at hand securing his armour and weapons, the boy is often a target of Cenric's impatience. When the company is brought in to speak to him, he waves the young lad off for a moment and takes stock of the company:

"I suppose you've heard the rumours of Orcs on our borders by now. As much as I'd like to send you to test your steel against those foul creatures, I have other concerns in Eastfold that need seeing to. A band of brigands from the South, if their look and manner are to be believed, have taken to theft and murder along the great West Road. I would have you put an end to this with all haste. Go at once to the village of Stotfold. My scouts have sent word that a survivor there may have knowledge of these ruffians."

The company should choose one spokesman to introduce them to Cenric, if he does not already know them – if they all insist on individually introducing themselves, his impatience will quickly show. **Courtesy** is the best way to get on Cenric's good side. Given his current mood, any attempt to use **Awe** will fall flat.

Interaction

Once introductions have been made, Cenric motions to his squire and returns to his preparations. The companions may have questions for him concerning the brigands. The Marshal knows few details, other than that several men and women were killed at a farmstead near the village of Stotfold, along the great West Road beyond Aldburg. A wandering traveller attempted to intervene but was overcome by the brigands and left for dead. The companions may attempt to take stock of the Marshal's current state of mind with an **Insight** test. It is obvious that Cenric is preoccupied by the Orc attacks and considers these brigands to be, at worst, a minor irritation. The Marshal is also concerned that his reputation is at stake, and is impatient to see both the Orc incursion and the matter of the brigands seen to as quickly as possible.

They might also use **Battle**, to discuss strategy and tactics with the Marshal, or **Lore** to appraise the landscape of Eastfold. **Courtesy** or **Riddle** might tease out further information from the Marshal, while **Song** could reassure him of the company's valour.

Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter

While Cenric has little choice but to make use of the company, the assistance and reward he offers them depends on how many successes they accumulated during the encounter:

1: Cenric is largely unimpressed by the companions. If he has the time, he would gladly find another company to send on this errand. Unfortunately, he has little choice but to trust in their dubious capabilities, and he isn't shy about letting them know how he feels about them. He offers up purses of 2 Treasure each if the company can bring the brigands to justice.

2-4: The Marshal is satisfied the companions can take care of the brigands. Though still preoccupied with the matter of the Orcs, he wishes them well and takes time to toast their departure and eventual success. He offers up purses worth 6 Treasure each for completing this task.

5-6: Impressed by their courteous behaviour, Cenric is reassured by the company's apparent competence. Not only does he toast their journey and offer them the purse above, he does so with a smile and offers to lend them horses, armour and weapons, should they require them.

7+: As above, and Cenric promises the companions a purse of 10 Treasure on their return to Aldburg. He also gives them a silver-encrusted horn – if they sound it in Eastfold or the Eastemnet, one of his captains will answer their call as swiftly as they can.

Departure

With the discussion concluded, Cenric takes his leave of the company and rides for the Eastemnet within the

hour. He sends word to his men to aid the companions should they cross paths when hunting the brigands. If the Marshal agreed to provide the company with horses and weapons, he makes the proper arrangements with his steward before departing Edoras.

The company is given access to a stable and a well-stocked armoury where they can choose horses and any additional equipment they may require. It is important to remind the company that these pieces of equipment are on loan from the Marshal, though borrowed weapons that serve the companions well may be added to the company's reward when all is said and done.

Once their preparations have been made, the company is free to leave for Stotfold. The village is about thirty leagues from Edoras along the great West Road, little more than twenty miles to the east of Aldburg. A mounted company can make the journey in two days, so just one Fatigue test (TN 12) is required.

- Part Two -
The Village of Stotfold

The walled village of Stotfold is the most prominent settlement on the great West Road, and has existed for over two-hundred years. Settled by horse-breeders from Aldburg, it has grown into a stopping point for travellers making their way up or down the great West Road.

Featuring a comfortable inn, at least by the standards of Rohan, not one but two watermills, a thriving marketplace and the largest horse enclosure in Eastfold, Stotfold is a welcome sight to those seeking a respite from the rigours of the road.

The village's walls are low and crafted from stacked fieldstones, providing a defensible perimeter that is manned by guards at all hours of the day. Entrance to the village is normally restricted after dark, but with the recent Orc activity to the east, as well as that of the bandits closer to home, the guards rigorously inspect anyone who comes or goes no matter the time of day.

Since the companions are formally representing the Third Marshal, they will be taken to meet with Éofolda, the Lady of Stotfold, soon after arriving in the village. Lady Éofolda is widely known as a gracious host with a sharp eye for talent (see *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 35). If the companions have accomplished anything of note in Rohan, she is likely aware of it.

After pleasantries, and the latest news from Edoras, Lady Éofolda notes that the company will, *"...doubtless wish to speak with the 'survivor'. I am not certain what I think of his tale. You must make your own judgment."* She arranges for her guards to conduct the companions to the inn where he is being held, and says they must but send word if they have need of her before withdrawing to attend to her many responsibilities.

The Speckled Roan

The Speckled Roan is a modest traveller's inn that sees to the needs of traders and farmers who find themselves inside the walls after dark. A successful Lore roll reveals some of the inn's infamous history. Its name stems from a story about the first family to settle the area, who were well known for the highly spirited nature of the horses they bred.

One day, a warrior from Westfold came in search of a steed befitting his skill and fury in battle. He demanded a particularly magnificent stallion the colour of a cloudy sky. The stallion belonged to the breeder, a man named Theorl, and had seen him safely through many battles; all offers—even the most outrageous—were refused. Later that evening, drunk and irritated by Theorl's unwillingness to sell the horse, the warrior once again approached him with an offer, even richer than before. When Theorl again refused, the warrior drew his sword and slew the breeder before taking the horse and fleeing into the night.

The next day, guards from the village pursued the murderer, but they found him trampled to death in the road after only a few leagues. Theorl's stallion was nowhere to be seen.

Ever since that day, it is whispered that on nights when murder sullies the souls of men in the earliest morning hours, the sounds of an angry stallion and the trampling of hooves can be heard in the distance about Stotfold.

Berevir of Gondor

The 'survivor' is being held under guard at the Speckled Roan "for his own good" since he was first found on the road to the east of the village. His name is Berevir, a rough looking Man from the South in his late thirties with greying brown hair and hazel eyes. His face, specifically the area around his left eye and temple, is beset by a brilliant bruise, likely sustained from a blunt instrument or heavy boot.

Despite his wounds and lack of cleanliness, Berevir has the bearing of a man who has known respect and seen many hardships. He speaks with a surety and precision that marks him as educated. Berevir is all too willing to tell the companions what he knows – no rolls are necessary. Here are some of the questions the companions might ask him. (Note that most of his answers are lies – *The Truth about Berevir,* opposite.)

Where were you headed?

"I was travelling north, trying to make my way to Dale, eventually. I'm hoping to find work there as a guard or soldier."

What do you do?

"I served in the army of Gondor, but recently mustered out to find my fortune in the North."

What happened?
"I came across a group of brigands assaulting some traders just east of here. I attempted to defend the traders, but I was overwhelmed and knocked from my saddle by the brigands' leader. The villains took my horse and all I owned and left me for dead."

As no one else survived the brigands' attack, there is no one to corroborate (or refute) Berevir's tale. Signs left behind by the bandits revealed that they took the traders' horses and fled north-east. Berevir offers to help the companions track the outlaws down.

He says he has a score to settle, but more importantly, he wish to recover his sword—an heirloom of his family that has been handed down from father to son for three generations.

Playing Berevir

Berevir was once a proud citizen of Gondor, but bad choices and ill fortune have made him a somewhat desperate man. He can be hard and even cruel, but he struggles with a guilt so deep that he is often plagued by nightmares.

If the company accepts Berevir at his word, he will attempt to prove his worth to them, as he is trying to make up for the crimes of his past.

If the companions reject his offer to join their company, he will make every attempt to follow after them. He will watch and wait for the right moment to prove that they need him. Though Berevir tries to convince himself that he desires justice, he knows deep down that what he really craves is revenge against his former comrades; especially Hirdan.

Companions who are distrustful of Berevir's story might attempt an **Insight** or **Riddle** roll (TN 18, Berevir has done a good job of concealing lies with truth). Companions hailing from Gondor reduce the difficulty by one level as they may have previously heard of him.

On a success, a hero can tell that Berevir is hiding something, but also that he seems honest about his wishing to recover his sword. On a great or extraordinary success, they note that Berevir appears sincere when discussing his past in Gondor, but less so when talking about why he left.

Any companion who succeeds at a **Search** test notices fresh scars ringing Berevir's wrists; a successful **Healing** test can identify them as signs that he has been manacled recently. If asked about the scars, Berevir reluctantly admits he was arrested for drunkenness while in Minas Tirith; part of the reason he has decided to leave his old life behind.

The Truth about Berevir

Berevir of Gondor was once a soldier, serving the Steward of Minas Tirith. He was given the position of captain early in his career, being the first son of an influential lord. From his position of privilege, Berevir grew idle and complacent, and soon convinced himself that while war is supposed to mete its victims among the renowned and the nameless alike, to march to the front was solely the duty of those of low birth. He was thus caught unprepared by the reality of war when a large contingent of Orcs attacked his position in Ithilien. Far from the ideals of courage and sacrifice, Berevir fled, deserting his men with a handful of soldiers.

He escaped north, with the intention of leaving Gondor. In time, he formed a band of brigands, composed of other deserters, common thieves and assorted criminals, stealing to survive as they went. Only when they reached Rohan did his men wrest themselves from his command. Hirdan, Berevir's deputy, betrayed him and left him for dead. The remaining brigands, fearing Hirdan's wrath, put up no resistance.

If, later in the adventure, the companions confront Berevir directly about his duplicity, giving substance to their doubts with some good rolls, the Man of Gondor might reveal the truth.. Yes, he was the brigands' leader until his deputy supplanted him, for he was unwilling to murder the traders in cold blood. Hirdan allowed Berevir to live, yet the former captain feels that this was his usurper's greatest mistake. After all, Berevir knows exactly where the bandits are going.

A Decision to Make

Whether or not the company uncovers Berevir's duplicity, they must still decide what to do with him. They are likely to be left with two choices:

- If the company believes Berevir, they might invite him to join them as a guide. After all, he knows what the bandits look like and he has a personal reason to see them brought to justice. Despite this, some of the companions might prefer to leave Berevir behind. Perhaps they don't trust him, or they feel that he is too infirm or injured to make much difference in the battles that are to come—neither of which is true.

- If the companions are suspicious and do not trust him, or if they already coaxed the truth out of him, they can leave him in the custody of the guards in Stotfold.

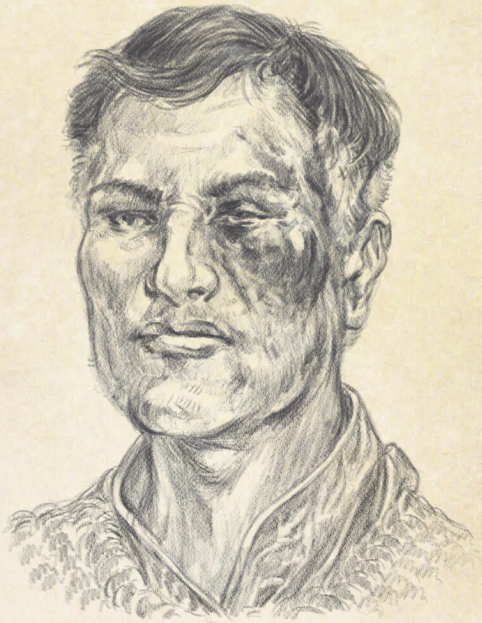
If it seems that the companions are about to leave him in Stotfold, Berevir reveals the truth of his past association with the bandits to the company. At this point he feels he has nothing left to lose, and hopes to appeal to the companions' sense of honour in a last-ditch effort to win his freedom:

"Should we catch these animals and see them punished, I shall gladly kneel before the King of Rohan and beg for his wise judgement. Though my honour in the eyes of Gondor is tarnished, I swear to atone for the crimes I have been party to upon Rohan's soil. If it is my fate to die for my crimes, I shall do so gladly... but I beg you to take me with you."

A successful **Insight** tests to discern Berevir's sincerity will confirm his willingness to lay down his life in order to atone. Even under such a circumstance, the company may still refuse Berevir's request. If that is the case, he will subsequently escape the guards and follow them at a distance anyway.

Berevir of Gondor

Berevir is a Man of Gondor in his later thirties. His countenance is rugged, though he was quite handsome in his youth. His hazel eyes have a haunted look, and his shaggy brown hair is shot through with grey. Though Berevir does not wear a beard, it has been many days since his face has felt the touch of a razor.



Attribute Level:	7
Specialties:	Folk-lore, Storytelling
Distinctive Features:	Determined, Grim, Hardened
Relevant Skills:	Athletics ♦♦♦, Battle ♦♦♦♦, Sword ♦♦♦
Endurance:	20

- Part Three -
Fury in the Darkness

After a night spent in Stotfold, the company sets out after the outlaws. If Berevir accompanies them, he guides them to where the bandits left him for dead, some fifteen miles south-east along the road towards Sunlending. Otherwise, the company must locate the spot based on directions given by the guards who found him.

Fortunately, the site of the ambush is not terribly difficult to find. Numerous tracks left by both men and horses cover the road and surrounding area, and many hoofprints can be seen leading off to the north-east. If the company takes the time to investigate the area, they might learn the following pieces of information:

- A successful **Hunting** test singles out two groups of tracks heading north-east. The first and oldest set of tracks was left by the bandits and their stolen horses. The second set of tracks were left by some of Cenric's Riders who picked up the trail the previous day. If a companion achieves a great success, they can discern that there were fifteen horses in the outlaw's group; and six horses in the second group of Riders.

- A successful **Search** test reveals signs of dried blood in several places on the roadside. This is where the traders were killed by the bandits. Though there is nothing more to learn from these patches of blood, they do remind the company of the atrocities they have been sent to avenge.

The Journey

The path taken by the bandits can be easily followed so long as a member of the company can succeed on a **Hunting** test.

The fresh tracks left by Cenric's scouts the day before are even easier to follow than those of the outlaws, and anyone tracking the scouts instead reduce the difficulty by one level.

- The tracks leads north-east for the next forty miles, ending at the river Entwash, close to the borders of the Fenmarch. The tracks then follow the river west for several miles, until they reach a point where the meandering waters can be forded. At this point, both sets of tracks disappear into the water.

- Fording the Entwash here requires a successful **Athletics** test. On a failure, the hero gains 1 point of Fatigue and must attempt to ford the river again.

Once across the river, a new **Hunting** test must be made to pick up the scouts' tracks.

- The tracks continue to wind to the north-east for another 10 miles, stopping at the remnants of a campsite.

Companions who successfully roll **Search** or **Hunting** may find out some of the following information:

- The camp was established by about a dozen men two nights before. Their horses, about twenty, were hobbled and left to graze while the men slept.

- The camp was broken in haste, the fire left to burn itself out.

- Their horses left the camp in a north-eastern direction, later followed by six more swift moving steeds – doubtless Cenric's Riders.

- Two pairs of footprints lead north-east into the tall grass, away from the camp, but only one pair of them returns. These tracks were not made by the scouts.

- The camp was later found by the Riders, who walked the area before following the bandits north-east.

Unless the company wishes to make camp here, they have little reason to remain. They may choose to continue north-east, or they might wish to investigate the two sets of tracks leading off to the north-west.

The Horse-lord's Barrow

The two sets of footprints leading north-west are hardly fresh. Any companion who succeeds at a **Hunting** test (TN 16) can follow them for nearly half a mile, towards a grass-covered mound. As the companions approach, a successful **Lore** test (or invocation of an appropriate trait, such as *Riddermark-lore* or *Old Lore*) reveals that the mound is an old barrow, a tomb to protect the remains of some long-dead lord.

It is obvious that the tracks are headed straight for the barrow. Though covered with earth and tall grass, old stones peek out from the undergrowth along the earthen structure's sides. The tracks continue around the mound in a clockwise direction and end near a pile of loose earth and stones that have been pried from the barrow's northernmost wall. A rusty pickaxe lays forgotten near the rocks. Only darkness can be seen inside, which is only large enough to admit one man-sized individual at a time.

A basic success at either **Hunting** or **Riddle** determines that two men entered the barrow here. A great or extraordinary success can read the signs that while two

men entered, only one exited, and running fast. A faint cry echoes from inside the barrow.

Entering the Barrow

Should the companions decide to investigate the barrow, they must climb in through the ragged hole on its north face. The distance to the barrow's floor is only about ten feet, but the climb down is treacherous nonetheless. Any companion attempting the climb must succeed at an **Athletics** test. If they take the time to use a rope or properly light the way, the difficulty is reduced by one level. Companions failing the **Athletics** test slip and fall for 10 feet in the darkness (see page 184 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game* for the consequences).

Once inside the antechamber, a torch is required to make out any details. Despite the gaping hole in the wall, the daylight that filters through fails to penetrate the gloom. The air smells of dust and old decay, and the ground is cluttered with stones pushed inward when the bandits forced their way inside.

The walls are decorated with old murals that depict the life of a great lord of the Eorlingas: his victories in battle and his achievements in peace. Above, written in the runes that the men of the Mark use in their lore, is the mighty lord's oath to watch over the Eastemnet for all time.

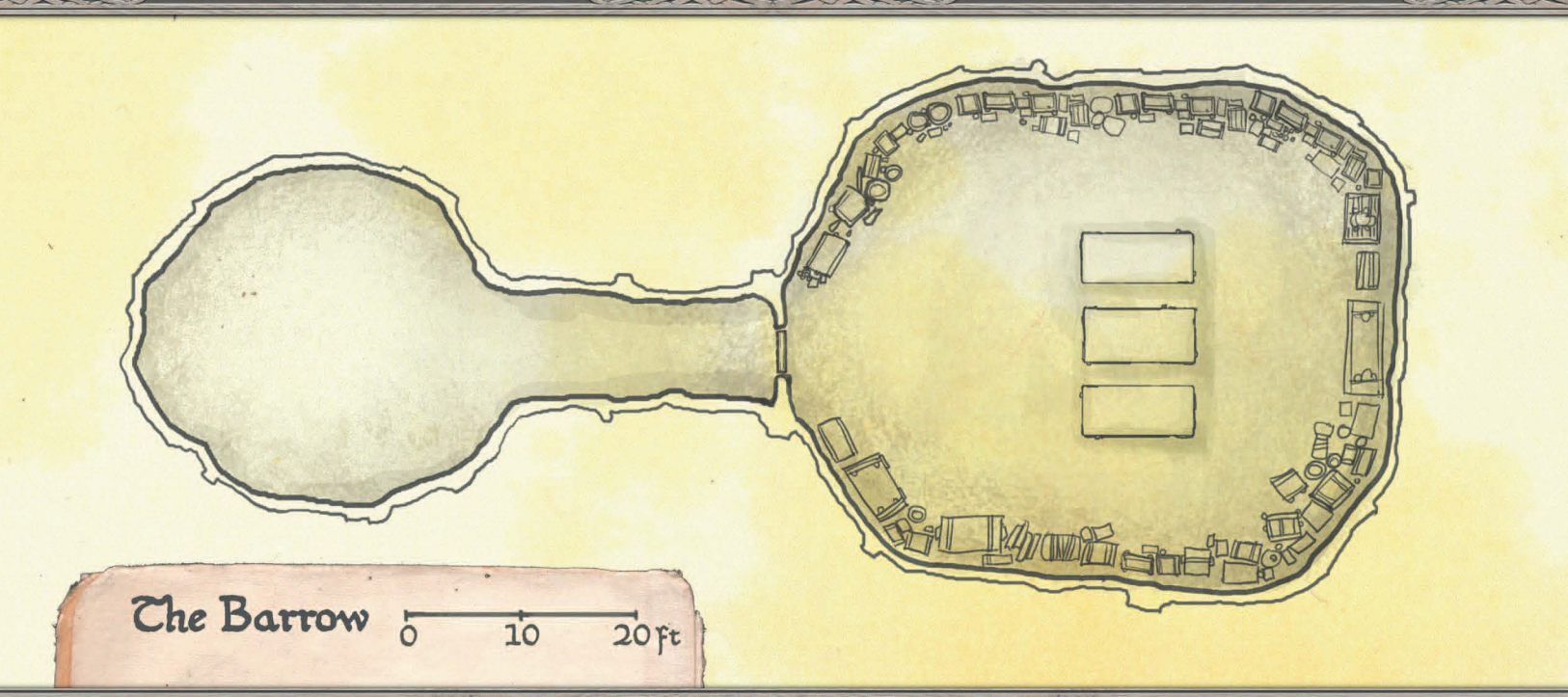
A single passage leads south from the antechamber, the walls constructed of neatly-stacked stones. The passage's height is less than six feet, though the width allows two companions to walk abreast. At the end of the passage is a heavy wooden door that hangs slightly ajar. A successful **Awareness** test detects the sound of pitiful sobbing from within.

The Horse-lord's Spectre

The wooden door creaks loudly when opened fully. Behind it is the tomb. Three stone coffins, covered in cobwebs and dust, dominate the centre of the chamber. By the markings it can be discerned that one coffin contains the lord to whom the barrow is dedicated, one contains the remains of his wife, and the last the bones of his horse. Surrounding the coffins are goods of all kinds in sealed boxes, casks and other containers. Another wooden door, closed and still sealed, can be seen beyond the coffins.

Near the sealed door a man dressed in filthy traveller's clothes sits against the stone wall, gibbering and weeping. His hair is white and dishevelled, and his eyes seem blind to all but his own misery.

Calling out or speaking to him produces no response and he continues to gibber unintelligibly unless a companion attempts to touch him, at which point the man begins to



scream and shriek in terror. The wooden door into the tomb slams shut and all torches dim, though they do not go out.

A large, shadowy form coalesces from the darkness beyond the three coffins, before moving to the shrieking man's side. The shadow solidifies into the shape of an old warrior, sitting astride a ghostly horse. *"More thieves?"* it hisses angrily. *"You shall rue this day!"*

Set Tolerance

The Horse-lord's Spectre has lain silent within the barrow for hundreds of years. The outlaws' recent intrusion into the barrow, combined with the growing darkness in the East, has disturbed its rest. The Spectre is not wholly an evil entity, and it allows a brief respite for parley before it decides whether or not to attack. Given the ethereal nature of the Horse-lord's Spectre, Wisdom rather than Valour determines the initial Tolerance for this encounter.

If the company contains at least one Rider of Rohan, increase the Tolerance by 1, if at least one of the Riders is from Eastemnet, increase it by an additional 1. If the company contains an Elf or a Dwarf, the Tolerance is reduced by 1.

Throughout the encounter, if a test is failed with an ᚢ, the Horse-lord's Spectre shrieks and immediately attacks the nearest companion.

Introduction

The Spectre hisses angrily before addressing them.

"Who are you to disturb my rest? Are you friend or foe to this would-be thief, who I caught unawares not two nights ago? I will not be denied my vengeance upon him, nor will I suffer you to leave if you, too, seek to plunder my vault!"

The Spectre is best placated with **Courtesy**, given its obvious anger. However, **Awe** can stir old memories of valour within it.

Interaction

The Spectre wishes to learn if the company intends to steal its hoard. Moreover, it refuses to give its prisoner up to the company unless convinced to do otherwise.

The Spectre is quick to take insult from nearly any provocation (see above), so the company must take special care in choosing their words – **Courtesy** or **Riddle** work best. However, any successful roll of **Song**—especially a song of the Mark relating to battle or kinship—counts as a great success, even if a ᚦ is not rolled. Another excellent way to get on the spirit's beneficent side is to promise to repair the damage done to the barrow's exterior (such as closing up the hole) with a **Craft** roll.

The encounter with the Horse-lord's Spectre may yield the following results:

1: The Spectre is convinced that the companions are not thieves. It does not attack them, but neither does it allow them to question the prisoner. They must leave the barrow immediately and never return, on pain of death.

2-4: The Spectre softens its tone towards the company and allows them to question its prisoner, though it does not permit him to leave.

5-6: The Spectre is impressed by the companions. It allows the company to take the prisoner with them, so long as they promise on their honour that he will be punished. In addition, the Horse-lord's Spectre offers a gold torc worth 4 Treasure to the company.

7+: As above, and the Spectre allows the company to choose pick through its treasures instead. (see The Horse-lord's Hoard).

Horse-lord's Spectre

(see Spectres in *Rivendell*, page 80)

The Horse-lord's Spectre cannot remember its own name, but it does possess memories of its people. Even though it is driven by anger towards those who disturbed its final resting place, it recognises any Riders of Rohan in the company as kinsmen. Should the company's encounter end in combat, the creature focuses its attention on non-Riders first.

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	Hate
28	8
Parry	Armour
5	2d
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 1
Movement, 4	Custom, 3
Perception, 2	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
None (incorporeal)	-
Special Abilities	
Ghost-form	Strike Fear (TN 16)
Dreadful Spells*	Visions of Torment

**Grieve:* A hero who fails a Corruption check (TN 16) due to Dreadful Spells experiences a harrowing sorrow, causing him to gain 4 Shadow points. If the check failed producing an eye, then the companion is also Wounded as an old injury reopens.

The Prisoner

Should the company have an opportunity to interrogate the Spectre's prisoner, they find him difficult to communicate with. The Spectre has driven the poor fool mad, and the only things that come out of his mouth are senseless ramblings. To somehow elicit any manner of lucidity from the man, one of the companions must achieve a great success on an **Awe**, **Persuade** or **Riddle** test. If Berevir is present, anyone attempting to speak to the man reduces the difficulty by one level. If the test succeeds, the man's eyes clear for a moment and he can be spoken to for a brief time.

With his mind being as broken as it is, the outlaw is not violent, nor does he attempt to escape. He only remains lucid for a few scant minutes before he goes back to his weeping, and no amount of threat, persuasion, or deception can undo the damage done to his mind.

Here are the answers to some of the likely questions:

Who are you?
My... name? J...Jor...al. Joral. I was... a soldier. Soldier of Gondor.

Where are the outlaws headed?
Emyn Muil. There is a tower there. Allies.

(The bandits intend to join a larger band of outlaws active in the area. See the entry for Herulf, Outlaw Chief, in *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 51).

What do they want?
Gold... Horses... Food. Freedom.

If Berevir is present
The man takes a moment to focus on his face, his eyes shining with recognition. *"Captain!"* he cries, his voice cracking with both fear and regret. *"You're alive! I'd no idea Hirdan had it in for you, I swear it!"* If Berevir's true identity is still unknown to the company, this revelation might lead to a serious discussion with him concerning the truth.

The Horse-lord's Hoard

The hoard of the Horse-lord is worth 20** Treasure, but taking it without the Spectre's permission (whether he has been defeated or not) is a *misdeed* worth 3 Shadow points. If the Spectre granted the heroes the right to

pick through his treasures, one companion may make a Magical Treasure roll (as per the Hoard rules in *Rivendell*) a failure produces a lovely, if mundane, silver and gold bauble worth 4 Treasure.

Resolution

Once they have escaped the Horse-lord's barrow, the company may return to the outlaw's cold campsite and continue on their way. If they are in custody of the outlaw grave robber, he remains uncommunicative, though he obeys simple commands and follows the companions like a child.

What they decide to do with him is up to them. (Grave robbing is a crime punishable by death in Rohan, but it is not the company's prerogative to mete out justice.) Similarly, if Berevir is present and has had his identity revealed by the prisoner, the party may need to make similar decisions about him, too (see earlier, on page 72, for more about this).

– Part Four –
Merchants Most Foul

Leaving the Horse-lord's barrow and the outlaws' cold camp behind them, the company continues to follow the tracks left by the brigands and the Riders pursuing them. Thirty miles north-east of the cold camp, the company arrives in sight of the East Wall of Rohan, the sheer cliff separating the green plains of the Mark and the Emyn Muil. There, they spot two Riders openly approaching them. Though wary of potential outlaws, the Riders have received word that the companions are in the service of Cenric and hail them peacefully as they approach.

Once introductions have been made, the two Riders, Hastred and Garhelm, tell their tale. Though their comrades had not caught up with the outlaws as of that morning, they did spot a group of merchants about 15 miles to the north. The merchants, several ill-favoured men, were in possession of six black horses, similar to those stolen on the great West Road.

Unfortunately, the Riders were forced to choose between taking the merchants to task and potentially losing the bandits, or continuing on their errand. In the end, they decided to send this pair of Riders as messengers, to await whatever aid Cenric was sending on.

Now, a mere four Riders track the bandits towards the Emyn Muil. Outside of news of the merchants, they have little information of interest to the company except for a warning: *"The closer you ride to the Emyn Muil, the more chance you'll have of running afoul of Orcs."* Both Riders are keen to get underway before the merchants can escape.

Suggested Hazard Episode – Orcs in the Ointment (Look-out Men – Dangerous Meeting)

As the company draws closer to the Emyn Muil, their Look-out Man spies a band of Orcs searching for the ill-favoured merchants, to escort them East. While they can be avoided with a successful roll of Awareness, leaving a band of Orcs to roam the Westfold is not the best of ideas for a heroic company.

Where there is Smoke

With the Riders pointing the way, the company's Look-out Men easily make out a wisp of smoke on the horizon (if they have no appointed Look-out Man, Hastred notes it instead). The smoke appears to issue from a small cooking fire. *"Only an outsider would be foolish enough to light a fire in our lands,"* Garhelm mutters.

If any of the companions wish to approach the camp unseen, they must succeed at a **Stealth** test to move silently through the tall grass. If they succeed, they will spy that the merchants have flattened an area of grass and are in the process of setting up camp. There are two more merchants then there are companions. If the **Stealth** test fails, they will alert the merchants, negating the surprise of any attack.

Once the situation is known to all, Hastred suggests the company surprise the merchants with a frontal attack from horseback. Despite his preference for a direct confrontation, both he and Garhelm accept whatever tactical advice is provided by the companions.

Hard-won Horses

Depending on the companions' plan, the combat can go any direction once the first blows are struck. Despite their numbers, the merchants are not hardened fighting men, and they prefer to flee rather than fight if given the chance. If cornered though, they will fight to their deaths.

Agents of Mordor (Evil Men)

These wicked men have been sent forth from Mordor to procure horses for their dark Master. Their clothing and curved swords mark them plainly as hailing from the South. It is the dark engravings on the black leather armour they conceal beneath their robes that reveals their allegiance with the Shadow in the East. They all speak the Common Speech fluently enough, but refuse to say anything should they be captured (a fate they try earnestly to avoid).

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	Hate
14	2
Parry	Armour
2 +2 (shield)	1d
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 2
Movement, 2	Custom, 2
Perception, 1	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
Scimitar	3
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
No Quarter	-

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Scimitar	4	10	12	Disarm
Dagger	3		14	-

Once the fighting concludes, the companions have time to see their fears confirmed - the gear carried by the merchants has a foul look to it, and some of them wear golden rings and clasps wound with repulsive motifs, maybe a mark of rank and distinction. A small, iron-bound chest contains several silver and bronze coins, struck with unfamiliar symbols and writing. A successful **Lore** test (TN 18) reveals that the coins are from Harad, a land far to the south (they are collectively worth 3 Treasure).

Investigating the bodies of the merchants calls for a **Search** test. If successful, a scroll case carved from dark hardwood is found among the tall grass, as if someone tried to hide it. Dried blood is smeared across the case's polished ebony.

Upon examination, the case has no seam, cap or hinges, and appears to be completely solid. Despite this, the case's weight infers that it is, indeed, hollow.

Aside from smashing the case open with a weapon or heavy weight—which would likely damage its contents—an in-depth examination of the case can reveal a hidden mechanism. With a successful roll of **Riddle** (TN 18), the case can be coaxed open.

Rolled up within the scroll case is a sheaf of papers, a small vial of ink, and an ivory stylus carved with a serpent-like scale pattern. Most of the papers are blank, but several sheets are scrawled in foreign characters similar to those featured on the coins.

The most interesting page features a hand-drawn map of Rohan. Settlements and outposts are accurately marked on the map, as well as lines that indicate travel routes—one of which crosses over the spot where the goodly traders of the Mark were slain.

Should the company somehow decipher the foreign tongue (a lore-master, or a far-travelled merchant), they discern that the written pages are a record of transactions and encounters. The most recent transaction involves the purchase of six black horses, which the merchants paid for using gold and silver. Other notations indicate that the merchants planned to take the horses to the Morannon, the Black Gate of Mordor.

Enemy Intelligence

The contents of the scroll case, especially the map, are incredibly valuable to the Rohirrim. If offered to Cenric, or the King himself, at the adventure's conclusion, the maps and documents should demand a handsome reward. Not only does the map detail the routes used by the servants of Mordor into Rohan, it also reveals several spots along the Mark's eastern border where Orcs commonly slip into the Eastemnet unseen. Armed with this information, Cenric should have little trouble stemming the flow of Orcs into his territory.

If given the maps, Cenric rewards the company with 6 additional points of Treasure in addition to whatever compensation they have already earned from him.

With the horses recovered, Hastred and Garhelm volunteer to return the beasts to their rightful owners. If one or more of the merchants has been captured alive, they also offer to take them back to Aldburg so they can be properly questioned by Cenric.

- Part Five -
Turning the Tables

Returning to the pursuit, the companions can easily find the bandit trail with turns to the north. A successful Hunting test allows the company to discern that the Riders slowed their pace when they turned north, as if they were aware of nearby foes. Fresh tracks mark the grass to either side of the Riders' trail, likely left behind by other men after the Rohirrim had passed by.

Without warning, the silence is broken by three short blasts of a horn. From the sound of it, the horn-blower is just over a mile away, on the other side of a rock-studded ridge. All Eorlingas know that such horns are often used to signal to one another during engagements – indeed, they may have been gifted with such a horn themselves (see page 68). Three short horn blasts in quick succession represents a call for aid.

If the company responds to the horn, either by climbing the ridge or riding around it, they discover four Riders under attack by a group of armed men. At least six bowmen, concealed behind rocks and high grass, are shooting arrows at the Rohirrim. The dismounted Riders have retreated behind the shelter of a large boulder. An arrow protrudes from one's shoulder. As the company looks on, one of the Riders sounds his horn again in desperation.

To the Rescue

The bandits, preoccupied by their targets, will be automatically surprised by the companions – no test is required. There are two bandits per companion, roughly spread out in pairs surrounding the besieged Riders.

Whatever the company decides to do, though, must be done quickly. As the players prepare to engage the enemy, another bandit arrow finds its mark in a Rider's chest. The man cries out in pain and slumps back against the boulder.

Bandits from the South

These men weren't always wicked, but under Hirdan's command they have committed several dark acts. They have no desire to die, but they do not wish to be caught as they believe they will be executed by their captors.

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	Hate
17	2
Parry	Armour
2 +2 (shield)	1d
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 2
Movement, 3	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Spear	2
Bow	2
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
Craven	-

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Spear	4	9	12	Pierce
Bow	4	10	12	-
Dagger	3		14	-

As soon as one or more bandits are killed or seriously wounded, the remaining outlaws attempt to flee. The tall grass makes it difficult to see them as they escape, but they are unconcerned with covering their tracks. A successful **Hunting** (TN 12) roll allows the companions to easily pursue them through the tall grass.

The Wounded and the Dead

Hilda of Eastfold is a shieldmaiden leading the four remaining Riders of Rohan sent by Cenric to find the outlaws' trail. She is young and restless, spry in the saddle and hardened by a lifetime of training. Two of her men have been shot with arrows, though only one has survived his wounds. Hilda explains that she was tracking the outlaws through the grass when the signs they left behind became confused. By the time Hilda realized it, she had

walked into an ambush. Disoriented by the tall grass, the Riders attempted to return fire as they sought a refuge from the enemy's arrows.

One of the Riders has been struck in the back by an arrow; the wound is serious and requires immediate attention. Whether or not he is successfully treated, he is incapacitated for the time being.

Hilda is torn, her duty is to see to her men, but she is ashamed of her performance and believes the death of her companion to be her fault. Unless she can be convinced to accompany her men to the Entwade, she will try to remain with the company until she finds redemption or glory.

Hilda of Eastfold

The youngest of five children, Hilda has spent much of her life living in their shadows. When she managed to became one of Cenric's most trusted Riders, her opinion of herself rose considerably. Due to the ambush, however, the young shieldmaiden's self-confidence has been shaken. She believes that the only way she will recover her honour is if she sees justice done to the bandits that attacked her men.

Attribute Level:	5
Specialties:	Horsemanship, Riddermark-lore
Distinctive Features:	Forthright, Proud, Steadfast
Relevant Skills:	Athletics ♦♦♦, Battle ♦♦, Bow ♦♦, Hunting ♦♦♦, Spear ♦♦, Sword ♦♦♦
Endurance:	18

Picking up the Pieces

After seeing to the wounded, there is also the matter of tracking the outlaws following the battle. It is even possible that one or more companions did not go immediately to the Riders' aid, instead pursuing the bandits in their retreat. Whatever the circumstances, tracking the bandits requires a successful roll of **Hunting**. From the markings left behind, it appears that the remaining bandits regrouped before moving further north on foot.

For the next few miles, the ground gets rockier as the company gets closer to the East Wall of Rohan. The tall grass becomes sparse, replaced by shorter grasses that provide little in the way of concealment. Wary companions may yet be concerned with another bandit ambush, but their fears prove to be unfounded.

Eventually, the company spy to their right an old and crumbling watchtower, perched on a rocky hillock, a few hundred yards from the rising East Wall. A successful roll of **Awareness** reveals that someone has taken shelter in the ruin; likely the bandits, given their course.

With night approaching, the company must decide their next course of action. Will they camp for the night and approach the bandits in the morning, or will they wait until after dark before striking the killing blow?

- Part Six -
Sharp Words

While some of the bandits were sent to ambush the scouts, Hirdan and the others remained at the tower to prepare a defence. The tower's strongest asset is the visibility it provides, which allows the bandits to see for miles in every direction.

Though the tower's upper floors have collapsed and the wooden gate has long since rotted away, the ground floor is still quite defensible. Arrow slits in the walls allow for defensive fire as an enemy approaches, and piles of rubble provide the bandits with cover should enemies gain entrance to the tower.

Hirdan has one bandit with him for each companion, plus however many escaped the company in the previous scene. He presses the survivors to hold their enemies back until he can work out a way to escape; he is only concerned about his own safety.

Though weary from their travels and exhausted from their failed ambush, the remaining bandits take up defensive positions on the ground floor of the tower under Hirdan's orders. Some of the bandits man arrow slits, while at least two guard the shattered gate from behind piles of rubble. Hirdan leads from the rear, guarding his gold, while considering his rapidly dwindling options. The glimmerings of a plan comes to him. He takes off his travelling cloak and motions to another bandit.

The Tower of Grass

No one in the Mark remembers the true name of the Tower of Grass, for its stones are older than the memory of any man living today. Abandoned by its builders hundreds of years ago, its walls have been gnawed at by both time and the elements. While it is not garrisoned by the Men of Rohan, horsemen riding across the plains occasionally take shelter within the tower's crumbling walls.

Like many forgotten places, the Tower of Grass has accumulated its share of legends with time. One particularly persistent tale recounts the last battle fought for the tower. The tower was besieged by a band of Orcs, but the soldiers stationed here refused to fight. Their leader, a doughty captain, cursed them for cowards and went to face the Orcs alone. Following their captain's valiant death, the tower fell to the Enemy, and the men were skinned alive.

Stories such as this have contributed to the belief that the Tower of Grass is haunted by the ghost of the fallen captain. He is said to call out to his men on stormy nights, rebuking them for their cowardice and the part they played in his death. More than a few travellers insist that such tales are true, and that they have heard the ghost's admonitions when the wind blows through the tall grass.

Siege or Storm

For the moment the companions have time to catch their breath, but they must soon decide whether to set up camp for the night or spring into immediate action. Approaching the tower unseen during daylight is hard, as its high vantage point combined with the low grasses make hiding especially difficult. Creeping up at night is somewhat easier, but the darkness can be as much a hindrance for the company as it is for the bandits. With evening approaching, however, a night assault may very well be the method of choice for the company.

Any character with an appropriate speciality (*Old lore, Region-lore*, etc.) can attempt a **Lore** test to see what they know of the watchtower. The results depend on their level of success.

- **Failure:** They did not even know there was a tower here!
- **Success:** They know the stories contained in the nearby box, but little else of interest is known.
- **Great Success:** Though the Tower of Grass is equipped with several arrow slits, one of the windows on the western wall was walled from the inside recently, to reinforce the crumbling structure. Approaching from that side provides the best chance to remain unseen. Each of the companions gain a bonus Success die to use in any ensuing combat, in addition to any others they may garner from a preliminary roll.
- **Extraordinary Success:** There is a well in the Tower of Grass that is connected to a secret passage. Though men of the tower's last garrison attempted to escape through the passage, they were discovered by the Orcs and died horribly. If the passage's entrance can be found, the company may be able to surprise the bandits by attacking them from within. The entrance is rumoured to be at the base of the hillock, but its exact location is unknown. A careful survey of the hillock, combined with a successful roll of **Search** or **Explore** (TN 16) locates a small, dank cave. The companions gain a bonus Success die to use in any ensuing combat, as above, and any ambush launched through the tunnel is automatically successful.

Negotiating with Hirdan

Another alternative to battle is an attempt at parley. Hirdan may be willing to listen to what the company has to say, but his tolerance for them is painfully low. In fact, if Hirdan finds out that Berevir is with the company, he will refuse to speak to them at all and orders his men to fire at will. He knows his former captain's mind all too well, and (rightfully) expects that Berevir plans to kill him at the earliest opportunity.

Set Tolerance

Hirdan is a man of action and is more impressed by an able combatant than a learned sage. The starting Tolerance for this encounter is equal to the highest Valour

among the company. If there are any Men of Gondor amongst the companions, reduce Tolerance by 1. If Hirdan is certain the companions have come to capture or kill him, reduce Tolerance by an additional 2. Finally, if the company outnumbers the bandits, increase the Tolerance by 1; Hirdan prefers to talk his way out of an unavoidable defeat. At the very least, he is interested in seeing if they have any weaknesses he can exploit.

Introduction

When the companions request a parley from the bandits, Hirdan comes to speak. He stands out of sight, but near enough to the tower door so that he can hear and be heard.

"You wish to speak, eh? How civilised of you. I can't say I expected such good manners from a pack of dogs of the Mark. Let's get on with it, then. What do you want?"

If the company intends to intimidate Hirdan and his men, **Awe** is the most appropriate skill to use. **Courtesy** is not something Hirdan responds well to, and all attempts to use it to negotiate with him are more difficult than normal (TN 16).

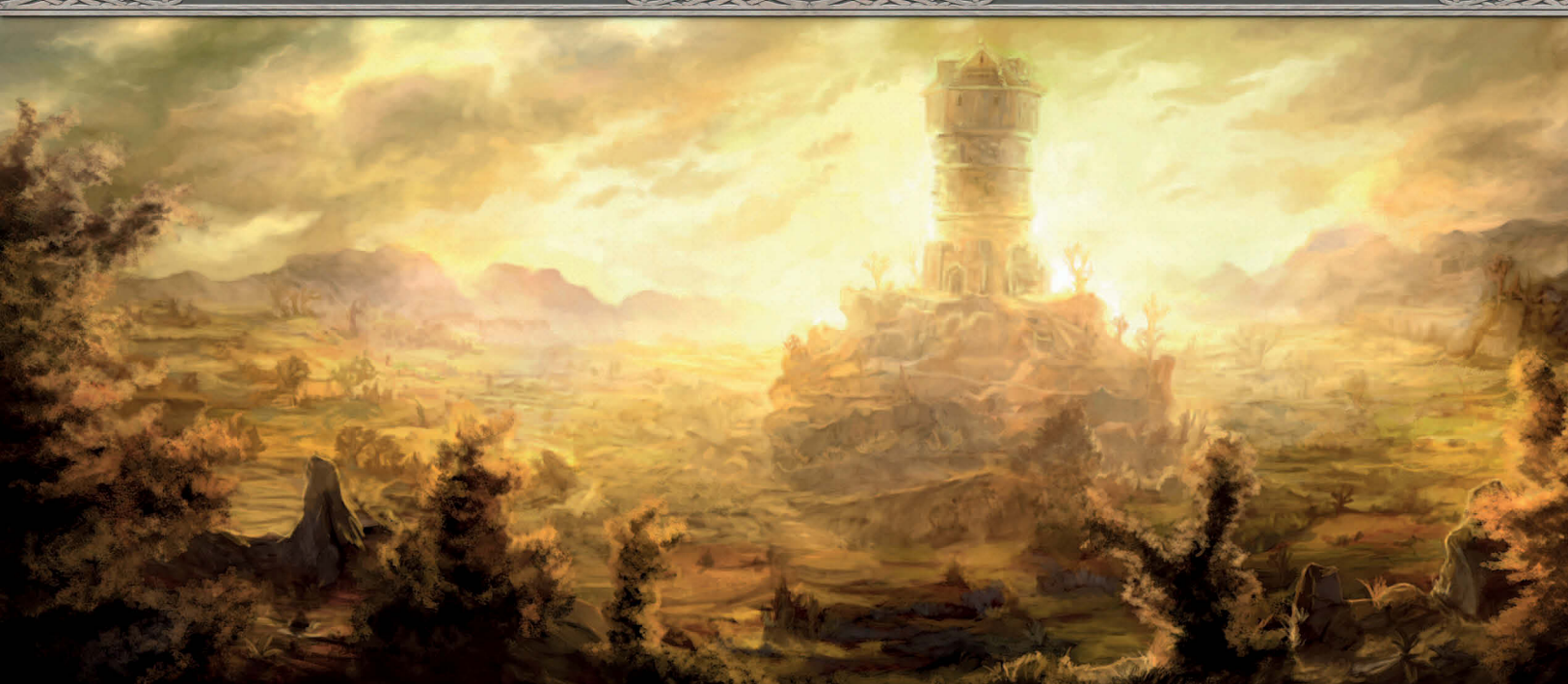
Interaction

Hirdan does not intend to take the company seriously. Of course, a well-spoken or intimidating companion has a chance of persuading the bandit into negotiating his surrender. Such an outcome won't be easy, given the initial Tolerance of the encounter. In addition, the difficulty of **Courtesy** tests remains elevated (TN 16); Hirdan cannot listen to such civil tones (especially when they are directed at him) without chuckling aloud.

- **1:** Hirdan is insulted and rejects any further conversation with company. To make matters worse, he orders his men at the arrow slits to fire upon the companions. He has no intention of surrendering without a fight.

- **2-4:** Hirdan is concerned by the obvious quality of the company's members, doubting that his men (such as they are) can defeat them in battle. He makes no commitment, and requests time to discuss the issue with his comrades. However, instead of discussing their surrender, the bandits formulate an escape plan (see **Hirdan's Plan**).

- **5-6:** Hirdan refuses to surrender on the companions' terms. Rather, he makes a counter-offer to the company: *"How about we make a deal? I'll give you a share of the gold I was paid for the horses we took. In return, you'll allow us to leave. I promise, you'll never see us again."* He's entirely serious about his offer, and plans to live up to his end so long as the company lives up to theirs. Should the companions refuse to honour



Hirdan's offer, he proceeds as detailed in the previous entry. If Hilda of Eastfold is with the company and they actually accept Hirdan's offer, she immediately draws her weapon and prepares to sell her life dearly, killing as many "traitors to the Mark" as she can. Regardless of the final outcome, all companions gain 4 Shadow Points for such treachery – even if they only agreed to turn on Hirdan at the first opportunity.

- **7+:** Hirdan agrees to a complete surrender. The company has convinced him that his cause is hopeless, and he can see fear in the face of each of his men. Even though he expects to be hung for his crimes, Hirdan hopes he may be able to escape before the company returns to Meduseld – assuming they do not kill him outright.

Hirdan's Plan

Assuming Hirdan doesn't reject the company's proposal outright or surrenders to them without a fight, he reasons they likely won't expect his men to flee without warning. To that end, he orders the bandits to mount their horses and make for the Emyn Muil as quickly as they can, charging through the companions' lines. Hirdan makes one of the bandits wear his cloak in order to fool the company into believing he is leading his men in their escape. In exchange, he promises to shoot at the companions from the safety of the tower when they attempt to pursue the bandits to the East.

Hirdan's plan to remain behind while his men flee to safety is not as selfless as he would have them think. In fact, he does not intend to fire a single shaft at the company. Instead, he plans to hide in the tower until the heroes have given chase to the decoys. Even if some of the companions remain behind to search the tower, he reasons he may be able to kill one or two of them by himself. At that point, he will gather his gold, mount his own horse, and gallop away in the opposite direction.

Whether or not the company falls for Hirdan's ruse remains to be seen. Being able to discern that the bandit wearing Hirdan's cloak is just another brigand requires an **Awareness** test (TN 18) – if Berevir is with the company, lower the difficulty by one level. Should they give chase to the bandits, it is not difficult for the company to catch up to the thieves. The brigands are not as capable in the saddle as Eorlings, and the rocky, uneven ground only adds to the risk when riding at such a quick pace. Any bandits captured alive by the company gladly confess that Hirdan stayed behind.

Unless someone was left behind to guard or search the tower, it is doubtful that they will see Hirdan leave. He can, of course, be tracked, but this proves more difficult than following an entire company of brigands. Succeeding at a **Hunting** test (TN 18) leads the party north after Hirdan, who is moving as quickly as he can before veering east. It is ultimately up to the Loremaster whether or not Hirdan can successfully escape.

If the companions did not bring Berevir with them, and he has not been spied up till now, then he will find Hirdan in the tower after the company have left in pursuit of the bandits. Companions subsequently returning to the tower will find Berevir's corpse, Hirdan having finished what he first started on the great West Road.

Hirdan as a Reoccurring Villain

If Hirdan escapes capture, it proves to be no small failure on the company's behalf. Not only is Cenric angry that the job was left undone, word soon spreads in Edoras about the companions' inability to catch the bandit. Their Standing score amongst the Rohirrim is reduced by 1. While this may very well be embarrassing for the companions, it allows the Loremaster a chance to bring Hirdan back as a villain during subsequent adventures. Giving the players a chance to capture or kill the outlaw who eluded them once before should allow them regain some face. Hirdan, with the support of Herulf, the outlaw chief, or his new masters in the East, will return with Orcs and brigands, perhaps establishing themselves in the Tower of Grass, and make travelling in north-east Rohan dangerous for many years to come.

Attacking the Tower

If the company decides not to parley with Hirdan, or their attempts to do so fail, they may launch an attack based on whatever knowledge they have managed to uncover

(see earlier). Depending on the method of assault they choose, the company may face volleys of arrows before making it to the tower gate. Once the companions gain entry, the remaining bandits and their leader fight them like cornered, desperate animals. No quarter is asked unless Hirdan falls, in which case the remaining bandits surrender immediately and unconditionally.

Hirdan, Bandit Leader

Hirdan is a large and imposing brute with reddish hair, squinting blue eyes and hands scarred from years spent breaking stone in Gondor's quarries. He wears a ragged red cloak over his armour and leathers. He is more cunning than intelligent, relying on his intimidating demeanour to cow his men into doing what he wants them to do. He wears an ill-fitting chain shirt and wields a fine long sword stolen from his former captain, Berevir.

Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
20	5
Parry	Armour
5 +2 (shield)	3d
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 2
Movement, 2	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Sword	3
Spear	2
Special Abilities	
Commanding Voice	Savage Assault

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Sword	7	10	18	Disarm
Spear	4	9	12	Pierce

The Bandits' Treasure

Hirdan and his bandits have stolen a number of horses and no small amount of loot while in Rohan. Though five of their horses were stolen in Gondor, the remainder (four in total) were taken in Rohan and should be returned to their owners if they can be found. As well as the animals, the bandits have 2 points of Treasure between them.

Hirdan possesses the gold paid to him by the merchants, which totals 8 points of Treasure, all of it strange coins with an unwholesome feel to them. Unless Hirdan attempts to escape, his ill-gotten gold is hidden behind some fallen masonry in the tower (requiring a **Search** test to uncover).

The equipment possessed by the bandits is a mixture of weapons and armour, none of it having been maintained particularly well. The sole exception is Hirdan's longsword, which is a fine weapon by any measure. Letters etched

into the blade record Berevir's family line for several generations, with his own sigil ending the progression. In part its theft is the reason Berevir so dearly wishes revenge upon Hirdan.

- Part Seven - Victory and Regret

If Hirdan and the bandits are defeated, they must be returned to Edoras to face the King's justice. If Berevir is with the company, he, too, must submit to the laws of the Mark to answer his own crimes. If he has not yet confessed the truth of his past crimes to the company, he does so now and surrenders himself into their custody. If the company takes him back to Meduseld with the rest of the outlaws, Berevir makes no attempt to escape. In fact, he keeps a close watch on the other prisoners and warns the company if they look to be planning anything.

The journey to Edoras and the route they take is up to the company, and it may be several days until they arrive back in the capital. Once they do, the prisoners are marched off to their cells while the company is recognised for their deeds. Though Cenric is still away in Eastemnet, his subordinates send him a message concerning the outcome of the adventure. When he returns, Cenric rewards the company as he originally promised.

In the Court of Thengel King

In the meantime, the bandits must be judged. Two days after their return to Edoras, the companions' presence is requested in the hall of Thengel King. Also in attendance is an envoy from Minas Tirith, a noblewoman named Halwen, who has been sent to oversee the proceedings against the criminals. She remains silent throughout, only nodding when Thengel King passes judgement on the bandits brought before him. Each and every one of them is sentenced to death.

Last of all, Berevir is brought before Thengel King. After the charges against him are read out, the King asks Berevir if they are true, to which he nods silently. As he has done before, Thengel asks the assemblage, *"Does anyone wish to speak, either for or against this man and the charges held against him?"* This is when members of the company may present themselves and speak on Berevir's behalf. Each companion may speak of his own accord, or the company may nominate a spokesman to speak for all. The number of successes the company gather during the encounter will decide Berevir's fate.

Set Tolerance

Thengel King prefers Wisdom when judging the accused. The initial Tolerance is set equal to the highest Wisdom among the companions, plus the highest Standing of any Rider of Rohan. A Man of Gondor willing to speak for Berevir increases the Tolerance by 1. If the companions have served Thengel King faithfully in a prior adventure, increase the Tolerance by 1, 2 if he is a formal Patron for the company. Finally, if Hirdan escaped from the player-heroes and remains at large, reduce the Tolerance by 3.

Introduction

During courtly proceedings, **Courtesy** is by far the best option open to anyone speaking to Thengel King. The company is instructed to approach the King and stand to the side of the prisoner. When they do so, Thengel addresses them in turn:

"Do you wish to speak on behalf of the accused?"

Interaction

The companions can attempt to convince Thengel King to show mercy to Berevir. Mercy can mean many different things in Rohan, but the ultimate goal is to prove that Berevir has earned a reprieve and must be spared the gibbet. **Courtesy** or **Persuade** is likely the best choice when convincing Thengel King of Berevir's value, though musical companions might use **Song** to tell Berevir's story in a lyrical fashion. ***Awe*** might also be used if Berevir's deeds were especially heroic.

Once they have made their case on Berevir's behalf, Thengel King makes his decision based on the company's successes.

- **1:** Thengel King is unconvinced by the company's dubious endorsement of Berevir. He has no choice but to send Berevir to be hanged along with the rest of the criminals.

- **2-4:** Thengel is somewhat moved by the company's support of Berevir. Instead of death, he sentences

the Man of Gondor to be cast out of the Mark, under penalty of death should he dare to return.

- **5-6:** Thengel is impressed. He condemns him to several years' indentured servitude to Rohan. While this amounts to hard labour, Berevir is allowed to live and may eventually earn his freedom.

- **7+:** Berevir's story, as well as the heartfelt support of the company, sways Thengel King's decision far more than expected. The King decrees Berevir should be set free, though he commands that the company be responsible for him for a period of no less than one year. If, after that time, Berevir has put his criminal ways behind him, he shall earn his full freedom.

If Berevir is placed in the care of the company, or is freed altogether, Halwen addresses the King.

"Though you are wise, Thengel King, I ask that you reconsider such lenience. The accused is an escaped convict, and he has been judged guilty for his crimes in Gondor. If you do not intend to punish him for his actions against the Mark, I beg you place him in my care so he may be returned to his homeland. There he shall carry out the remainder of his sentence."

Thengel knows that he must balance his desire to see justice done with Rohan's friendship with Gondor. Thengel is certain his final decision will have few political repercussions, for Berevir's punishment is a trifling matter in the grand scheme of things; however, he can also see Halwen's point, and understands why Gondor might wish Berevir to serve the rest of his time under their care.

Thengel King turns to the company once more. *"What say you to Halwen's request? Is it not just that Berevir return to Gondor and be punished for the crimes he committed there?"*

If so inclined, the companions can now attempt an opposed action against Halwen's **Persuade** skill of 3. If the company succeeds, Thengel confirms his judgement of the man and lets him go free or puts him in the custody of the companions.

- Aftermath -

The bandits that were captured are executed for their crimes and eventually Cenric returns to Meduseld after seeing off the last of the Orc incursions in the east. He rewards the companions as promised, depending on the extent of their success (see page 68). If the company managed to find the scroll case containing documents belonging to and provide them to Cenric, he is able to do even more to stem the flow of Orcs across his borders.

Fellowship Phase

The outcome of the adventure can vary quite a bit, and the Fellowship phase should reflect on the events that transpired, as well as their consequences.

- If the bandits, including Hirdan, were caught and punished, Cenric's opinion of the company increases. He allows them to keep any equipment or horses they borrowed from him as further reward for their excellent work. If the bandits, especially Hirdan, were not brought before the King, Cenric makes his displeasure with the company known.

- If Berevir is given over to the company's care or freed outright, his subsequent behaviour is unimpeachable. He makes an effort to sell his skills as a soldier and leader of men, eventually instructing Rohan's warriors in the battle techniques used in Gondor. He remains a friend of the company, and can be counted on to aid them in the future should they require him. Should he return to Gondor in Halwen's custody, he is never heard from again.

- If Berevir is not sufficiently punished for his crimes and allowed to walk free in Rohan, Halwen continues to keep an eye on him. Should Berevir return to Gondor for any reason, she makes certain that he is arrested and sent to prison at once. Even if she is given custody of Berevir, she remembers the company and may cause trouble for them should they ever find themselves in Gondor.

Below the last - mountain -

- **When:** This adventure is set in the autumn of 2961, but could be set during any autumn between 2960 and 2970, following the events depicted in *Red Days Rising*.

- **Where:** The adventure begins at Grimslade, but the trail leads through the Gap of Rohan into the West-march, under the shadow of the White Mountains.

- **What:** Orc raiders have suddenly assaulted Dunlending villages near the mountains in force, taking dozens of captives.

- **Why:** Orcs have taken traders from the Riddermark and Dunlending villagers alike as slaves. The Dunlendings point the player-heroes to the trail and beg help for their own stolen people.

- **Who:** The player-heroes set out with a fractious band of Riders from both West and East. Holding them together in an unfamiliar land is a challenge itself.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into six parts. It begins and ends at Grimslade.

Part One – The Two Marshals

In Grimslade the company is witness to a meeting of Cenric of Eastfold and Éogar of Westfold. The feuding marshals have come together to make peace at their king's command, but peace is not always easy for warriors to find. Unexpected word of Dunlendings pulls the companions away from an uneasy hall.

Part Two – The Villages of West-march

The company meet with Dunlendings and find them a tragic lot. They report traders taken by Orcs along with many Dunlending villagers. Riding to the rescue, divisions among the Riders lead to disagreements on how best to find the captors.

Part Three – The Raiders' Trail

The company follow an Orc-trail across difficult and exhausting terrain. Along the way they find signs of another, larger raiding-party heading elsewhere. If they send scouts along the second trail, it leads north toward an untouched village. The new trail, the difficulty of the landscape, and the choice between speed and safety threaten to further divide the Rohirrim.

Part Four – The Orc-Camp

If the company followed the trail swiftly enough, they find the Orcs and their captives, along with a band of Dunlending slaves, camped in a deep wooded vale. The company must choose how to assail the raiders and what to do with captives of their own.

Part Five – Distant Kin

After defeating the Orcs the Riders meet a large band of Wulfings from Frecasburg. They say they have seen signs and heard rumours of another Orc raiding-party, maybe more than one. They mean to confront and destroy intruders into their land; whether they mean the companions depends on the first encounter. Some Riders would be glad to drive the Wulfings away in battle. Others press for alliance.

Part Six – Hunters and Hunted

Other Orc raiding-parties converge on the company and Wulfings, meaning to grab as many as they can. Do the Riders detect them in time to protect themselves? Do they join with the Wulfings or part ways? Do they seek shelter in the area? The Riders must either defeat the raiders or escape them to return to the Riddermark.

Epilogue – Return to Grimslade

After avoiding, fleeing, or defeating the Orcs, the company returns to Grimslade to bring news of their success or defeat. Their mission has been used by the feuding marshals to put off their peace-making, but now there are no excuses, and rather they won the day or not, the player-heroes have been instrumental in bringing some peace to Rohan, for under their command Riders of the

Westfold and Eastfold have shed blood together against a greater foe.

The Eye of Mordor

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules presented in *Rivendell*, any revelation episodes occurring during this adventure are likely to revolve around infighting breaking out between the marshals' households, enemies attacking from an unseen quarter, or unexpectedly fierce weather.

- Part One - The Two Marshals

The company is gathered at Grimslade, the holding of Grimborn, a leading captain of the Riders of Westfold. Many minor lords of Westfold are here. Thengel King has ordered their leader Éogar to put aside their blood feuds and make peace with Cenric of Eastfold. They have come to Grimslade to witness this event, swelling the number of guests that Grimborn has to contend with. Both Grimborn and Grimslade are described in more detail in *Horse-lords of Rohan* (pages 42-43). Grimslade is a large longhouse, and can hold the majority of the lords present, but most of the guests have joined one of two camps nearby. The two camps are set a fair distance far apart, but even so all can see suspicious eyes cast across the grassy field.

The State of Affairs

The situation at the start of this adventure will vary depending on how the company fared in *Red Days Rising*, as well as their ongoing relationships with Éogar, Cenric, and Thengel King. If the players have not played *Red Days Rising*, the Loremaster may pick whichever situation sets the desired mood.

The Company was Unsuccessful in Ending the Feud

Should the player-heroes have failed to end the feud in *Red Days Rising*, their presence here will not be entirely welcome. Both Cenric and Éogar may have been offended by the company's clumsy attempt to manipulate them, though subsequent interaction with the player-heroes may have changed their minds about the companions. If the company has good relations with Thengel King, they have travelled to Grimslade at his behest, to serve as his eyes and ears. If not, they are present because of the great significance of the event.

The arrival of the feuding marshals is a tense affair. Both Cenric and Éogar came with warriors; not so many so as to appear threatening, but enough to maintain their safety if things go poorly. No one is at ease, for even though they have been ordered by their king to make peace, the marshals and their clans have for too long shed each other's blood.

The Betrothal of Esmund and Mildyrd was Successfully Arranged

If the company succeeded in arranging the betrothal, the gathering at Grimslade takes on a far different tone. The marshals are there to make peace and to celebrate the announcement that Esmund and Mildryd Shielding are to be wed. The marshals will bring gifts for them both. The player-heroes are there as representatives of the King, but are still expected to bring their own gifts. Symbolic gifts that help to reinforce the bonds between Eastfold and Westfold are highly prized.

As their role in forging these same bonds between the clans of Cenric and Éogar was such a notable one, both marshals, as well as Esmund and Mildryd, will be generous to them in return. The gifts the company receives are small things, but items that have a personal touch. They should suit the player-heroes calling and culture: finely wrought saddles, a gilded dagger, goose-fletched arrows, a wooden cup carved from a lustrous wood and so forth.

Relations with the Marshals

Whether or not the company forged a treaty with the Iron-folk (see *Wrath of the Riders*) will have greatly influenced how Éogar regards them. He may respect them as courageous, think them fools, view them as suspect agents of the King, or any combination thereof. The warriors of Westfold will certainly not know quite what to make of them, especially if they succeeded in securing an alliance with the Iron-folk. The Eorlings here have fought

Dunlendings for so long that formal peace with any of their kind is a strange experience.

If the company has played through the events of *Black Horses, Black Deeds* and successfully ended the bandit threat to the Eastfold, Cenric likely regards them well. If they haven't or failed to end the threat, relations depend on how they left them during the events of *Red Days Rising*.

Dark Tidings

The companions are gathered outside Grimslade's longhouse along with Grimborn, both marshals and their respective entourages, and many other warriors perhaps including Esmund and Mildryd Shielding. As morning comes, the two parties break their fast and prepare to greet each other, the player-heroes ready themselves to witness a historic event, but none can say if it will be obedience and peace, or war and treason. The atmosphere may be tense or joyous, depending on the current state of political affairs in Rohan.

Suddenly a horn sounds and all turn west to see a rider coming fast up the trail. The rider's helm and spear glint in the sun, and all marvel at who this fast and reckless rider is. The crowd mutters; some say it is a late member of one or another marshal's household, or perhaps someone who still has the feud burning in their hearts. For his part, Grimborn grumbles under his breath and passes a small remark to Éogar with a sigh.

The rider, Rynelda Fast-rider, her swift steed throwing clods up from its fast-moving hooves and her long fair hair streaming out behind her, soon comes into view. With little more than a nod to her marshal, Éogar, she wheels her horse and shouts out her report.

"Harken for I bring news! Just as the sun passed the mountains this morning I spied a large band of Dunlendings crossing the West-march, streaming in numbers towards Westfold. From some distance I saw them and could not count their numbers, but it is many."

This is grave news, but one that the two marshals must both answer. Yet it cannot be used as an excuse to distract them from the orders of their king. Neither Cenric nor Éogar can send many men, and Grimborn needs all he can keep in case the day turns sour. However, this news needs to be investigated, and if true, acted upon.

The dilemma here is clear – neither Marshal can send anyone without the other sending some in turn and who would be in charge? Having the company lead such a force is clearly the best solution and if any of the player-heroes volunteer, their offer is immediately taken up.

If not, Grimborn finally suggests that a mixed group of riders should go, led by a neutral party – all eyes would soon turn to the companions. As Rynelda Fast-rider did not see a clear count of how many Dunlendings have crossed the ford, the first task of any force will be to count their foes and send Rynelda back with a more complete report.

The Heroes' Riders

Each marshal assigns commands two Riders from their household to join each player-hero, meaning there are there are four Riders for each companion.

These Riders, the chosen favourites of their respective marshals, are steadfast and brave, but mostly serve as background for this adventure. They bicker and argue periodically, but will mostly defer to the player-heroes. There is no need to make any rolls for them.

Handling such a large number of Loremaster characters can be tricky. Loremasters should focus on one or two Riders from each side, leaving the rest as "window dressing". Below are some names for the Riders, and a trait that best describes them.

- Baldor, a rider from Westfold known for his short temper and *suspicious* nature.
- Brego, a young rider who is *curious* about the world and the creatures that live in it.
- Edyth, a rider hailing from Westfold, is *loyal* to Éogar.
- Éofor, known mostly for his *reckless* riding and disdain for danger.
- *Grim* Fastred of Eastfold always does his duty, though he is usually rather sour in his attitude towards success.
- *Forthright* and *true-hearted*, Folda of Eastfold is a paragon of truth.
- *Bold* Rowena of Eastfold weighs her chances and bravely rides into danger.
- *Strong* and *hardy*, Frida is the most *robust* of all those from Eastfold.

– Part Two –
The Villages of West-march

Rynelda Fast-rider leads the company south-west of Grimslade, between the southern bank of the Isen and the northern peaks of the White Mountains. It is hilly country, but the trail is in good repair so that horses may swiftly ride upon it. After some twenty miles travel, a large cloud of dust is spotted to the west, a sure sign of a large number of people on the move.

The oncoming multitude is not a horde of Dunlending raiders looking for loot and captives, but fleeing old men, women, and children. They travel down the middle of the road, driving livestock before them. Some drag small carts laden with household goods, others strain under heavy packs lashed with all their worldly possessions.

Most have nothing but the clothes on their backs. Only a handful of warriors move with them, and then only at the very edge of the group.

This is unlikely to be what the company were expecting. There might be a few hundred Dunlendings trudging along, their faces torn with grief and their eyes just shy of open panic.

At the first sight of the Riders of Rohan, a cry goes up amongst the refugees, and some turn to flee in any direction that takes them away from the company and their troop. Their few warriors grip their spears and try to move forward through the press. Most simply resign themselves to their fate and collapse on the road or stand bewildered.

As the company approaches, a small knot of elders push themselves out of the crowd and come forward, their arms spread wide and their sheaths empty.

"Hold Forgoil and stay your spear arms! Rein back your swift steeds and listen! We come not to invade your land and despoil, for we ourselves have been despoiled this day. A great party of Orcs, fierce fighters from their cursed High Stone, have descended upon us. They have burned our houses and fields, driven our cattle before them, and scattered our people.

More, you share in our grief – these fiends have taken with them traders of your people, merchants from the Mark who had come to trade cattle for iron.

You may ride us down and finish the fell work the Orcs have begun, or you may leave us here to suffer. We do not expect any of you to console us, nor provide even a branch to shelter beneath. Your minds will doubtless to set to rescuing your own. If you ride west swiftly, you will soon find the raider's trail."

There is some disagreement amongst the Riders accompanying the company as to what to do about the refugees and the raiders. Some say that these Dunlendings are nothing but vermin and should be driven back towards their own lands immediately. Others speak of compassion and that they should be at least watched and guarded.

Whoever speaks first, if the speaker is one of Cenric's or Éogar's warriors, a Rider from the opposing household will immediately contradict him, espousing the opposing view. It will quickly become evident that the Riders are more interested in fighting each other than dealing with the problem at hand. It is up to the company to choose a path and lead the rest of their éored along it.

There is no fight to be had here: if the company decide to chase the Dunlendings off they will flee south towards a spur of the White Mountains with the hope to eventually make their way to the land of the Wulfings or north towards Isengard – this is a misdeed worth 4 Shadow points.

If they make some small effort to help, the Dunlendings will be grateful and will continue the way they had intended, to cross the Fords of Isen and head north into the Dunland Fells. (While this will not seem to benefit the company at the time, it is a good deed that will not be forgotten, see page 119 of *Woes of Winter*.)

Stonegap

As the company continues to ride to the south-west, they reach the nearest Dunlending village in the West-march, Stonegap, nestled in the foothills of the mountains amidst a large field of boulders. Their approach does not go unnoticed; a small herd of goats are left unattended as the young boys set to watch them run shrieking towards the village. Soon after horns are heard from the settlement, and people can be seen scurrying about, some seeking shelter, others gathering in the middle of the settlement where two trails cross. Within moments of the first horn blast, a small band of Dunlending warriors have started to form up, ready to see off the company.

The Dunlendings are scared, but not necessarily of the recent Orc raids. They see the company approaching and can only assume that so many Men of the Mark, armed and armoured for war and set upon their swift horses, can only mean to attack. The player-heroes must think and act well in order to avoid needless bloodshed.

Rolls of **Awe** or **Persuade** can be used to convince either side to stand down and sheath their arms. The difficulty is set at TN 14, but is lowered by one level if the company is favourably known to the Dunlendings, or raised by one level if the company has shed blood in these lands before (most likely in *Wrath of the Riders*, on page 54, but possibly also as a result of botching the rescue of Esfled in *Red Days Rising*).

If diplomacy fails, battle is briefly joined – there are two Gáesela warriors for each player-hero, and enough others to keep their warriors busy. The fighting will swiftly grow beyond the companions ability to control – Riders from Westfold will be swift to set the Dunlending's village ablaze and will only stop if directly ordered to cease by the player-heroes. Failure to stop the burning of Stonegap is a misdeed worth 4 Shadow points. With any number of warriors slain, the Dunlendings will tell the company nothing. An hour's worth of search finds clear marks of where the fleeing Dunlendings came from, on the trail to the south-west.

If negotiation is successful, the player-heroes may then speak with Stonegap's chieftain, Madrach. He is a man of plain talk and straight speech, more impressed by uses of **Awe** then of **Persuade** or **Courtesy**. But any success will earn the following from him:

"I have not seen any raiders, but the folk who were driven out passed this way. Many villages were attacked, and we must be prepared ourselves lest one of our enemies, from the west... or the east, comes. If you are looking for your own folk, Widhelm the Shrewd came this way trading for cattle. He went off west and south towards Ice Shadow."

Ice Shadow

Continuing to ride south-west from Stonegap, the company approaches the remains of Ice Shadow. They can see the smouldering remnants of homes, outbuildings, and fields. The raiders are long gone, flies swarm over the corpses, and dried blood has soaked into the soil; however, they left not overly long ago, for some of the remains still send thin tendrils of smoke into the air.

Signs abound that there was a short, sharp fight here; the unburied bodies of Dunlendings and Orcs lie scattered about. The livestock has been slaughtered or driven off, and anything of value has been carried away. Amongst the dead are two horses that clearly came from the Mark slain by Orc arrows, a sure sign that the missing traders were here. The raiders did little to cover their trail as they left with their loot, and the boot prints of a dozen or more Orcs, as well as their captives, can be seen heading south-west.

- Part Three - The Raider's Trail

Where the Orcs went across the West-march the trail is easy to follow; it would have been all but impossible for the Orcs to drive their captives and looted livestock without leaving some mark in the ripened autumn grass. Once the ground begins to rise, it becomes rockier, the grass shortens and the trail starts to become more difficult to follow.

Rynelda at this point declares that she must return and tell the Marshals what the company intends, along with giving them an idea of what has occurred. The company has a few options as they pursue the raiders. They can attempt to overtake them, or continue to follow their trail to see where it leads. There are also three smaller trails that split off from the main one – each side trail has a scene connected to it, but pursuing these distractions almost guarantees they will not be able to catch the raiders on the trail.

Following the Raider's Trail

The Orc raiders are moving as fast as they can, pushing their captives along using beatings and insults as motivation. They do not bother to cover their trail until they enter the mountains. While the initial pursuit across the West-march is relatively easy, the rocky terrain and circuitous routes of the White Mountains help hide the Orcs' route.

- The pursuit of the Orc raiders is a prolonged action requiring 9 successful **Hunting** tests against TN 16, with cooperation of up to 3 player-heroes allowed. Each player-hero can make only one roll a day due to the stresses of crossing such difficult mountainous terrain. A great success equates to two successful rolls, and an extraordinary success to three successful rolls, but any result subtracts 1 success.

The Orcs have quite a head start and will likely reach the vale where they plan to camp well before the company catches up to them. The Orc raiders' camp is five days of travel through the White Mountains from Ice Shadow: The raiders struck the village two days before the company arrived, and then swiftly left with their captives, meaning that the companions have only only three days before the raiders reach their destination. If the company manages to reach the required total of 9 successful tests before three days have passed they can catch the Orcs while they are still on the trail (see *Catching the Orcs on the Trail*, on page 97).

Hazards of the White Mountains

During the pursuit, a failed roll with an ᚠ produces in a Hazard episode exactly as during a journey (in addition to subtracting a success from those accumulated). A horse throws a shoe or gets a stone in its hooves; Wild animals such as bears or wolves threaten a lone player-hero; An early autumn snowstorm falls and obscures the raiders' tracks. Here follow some examples.

Blind Canyon (Guide - Fatigue)

While looking for a way to get around a slope that the horses could not climb, the guide leads the company on a circuitous route leads to a dead end, forcing them to retrace their paths across the rugged landscape.

Caught on the Mountain (Scout - Weariness)

While looking for a route up the mountain, the scout gets separated from the company and spends a long cold night alone without even a fire to cheer and warm him.

Dropped Doll (Huntsman - Despair)

The huntsman comes across a sign of the raiders, a small rag doll dropped by one of the younger captives.

Shower of Stones (Lookout-Man - Strain)

A sudden rain of stones from above, possibly from the passage of animals or the blowing of the wind, rain down.

Sidetrails

Each day of tracking offers up a distraction that could slow pursuit as well.

Sidetrail 1 - The Lost Orcs

Around midday on the first day, a smaller side trail is spotted leading off to the west. A successful roll of **Hunting** shows that at least several Orcs passed this way. If the company wishes to investigate, they lose the equivalent of 1 success from the prolonged action total. The trails wends for a few miles over harsh terrain to a small cave in the mountainside. A roll of **Awareness** reveals a thin stream of smoke coming from the cave. Inside are four Orcs, and their captives, a Dunlending woman and a trader from Eastfold. The Orcs snuck away from the rest of the raiders and struck out on their own. Their plan was to make their own way towards the High Stone, and throw their lot in with Gazhúr Three-Deaths, offering up the slaves as tribute. Having a company of Rohirrim arrive on the doorstep of their hiding hole was not part of the plan.

If attacked, the four Orcs will try to fight their way out and make a run for it over the rockiest and steepest ground they can find, the better to outrun mounted warriors.

If rescued, the Dunlending woman is nearly incapacitated with grief at the loss of her family and the brutality of her captivity. The trader, Widhelm, is a little better comported, but not by much. The Orcs have been treating him slightly better in the hopes that he could be ransomed by the Wulfings or Dunlendings further west. Both captives will need care and compassion if they are going to survive the mountain. A roll of **Healing** can mend the broken bodies, whilst successful rolls of **Inspire**, **Persuade** or even **Song** can be used to lift the spirits will get them moving, and help Widhelm to gain enough composure to be talkative.

"I had stayed the night after the trading was done and planned to set out in the morning ... they came in the night ... howling and screaming ... fires, they lit the houses on fire and slaughtered the warriors as they came out... I tried to fight clear, but my horse, oh my horse... the Orcs took me there in the village, what was left of it... their leader is a cunning brute named Malthor Axe-Bitten... you will know him by his scarred face... they are heading for

someplace ... Malthor said ... Malthor spoke of another chieftain raiding ... he fears his band will get eaten up by a larger one."

The two freed captives can walk, but just barely. The terrain is arduous and they have been beaten, starved and deprived of sleep and water. The raiders, as Orcs are wont to do, are travelling at night and seeking shelter during the day. Someone will need to take these two back down off the mountain; forcing them to march along in the pursuit, even if given horses to ride, would be a cruelty and abandoning them is a misdeed. Two of the Riders accompanying the company can be given this task.

Sidetrail 2 - The Escapees

The next day another trail can be spotted heading away from the main raider's trail. A successful roll of **Hunting** shows that this trail is composed of two parts: three sets of soft-shoed feet, with a pair of hobnailed booted feet coming shortly after. Following the trail leads down the mountain and south-east. If the company stops to investigate, they lose 1 success from those accumulated in their prolonged action.

Following the trail, the company soon comes upon the body of an Orc, its head smashed by a rock. The trail leads on for several miles before coming to a bizarre scene. An Orc is at the top of a scraggly mountain yew and three Dunlending women stand below it attempting to reach it with thrown rocks and long sticks. As the player-heroes approach, two of the Dunlending women take off, skipping over the boulders and scree like people born to run the mountains and barren lands.

The third turns to the company while brandishing a large piece of wood.

"Turn back Riders, for this one is mine and I will not be taken or murdered by the likes of you! I have slain one Orc this day, and will do for this one and you as well if you want to pass me and ride down my kin."

The Dunlending woman's name is Gwya. She managed to sneak away from the Orc camp last night and fled in the direction of their village. A pair of Orcs followed, and Gwya managed to kill one with a rock. When the second Orc caught up to the women, they attacked him with vicious howls and a shower of stones, forcing him to seek safety in the tree.

If treated with respect – and especially if given food and water – Gwya will tell them all she knows. The Orcs attacked her village in the middle of the night and took them by surprise. Their leader was a large Orc with a face that had clearly once been cloven in two. There had been merchants from Rohan in the village. Gwya herself is kin

by marriage to Déormód, a leader among the Wulfings and believes it likely the Wulfing may have already heard of their plight.

Sidetrail 3 – The Ambush

Malthor the Orc is no fool, and he knows that the Riders of the Mark are in pursuit. He eventually cut north-west into even more rugged and perilous terrain, while at the same time leaving a small band of raiders back to harass the Rohirrim.

The band comprises one Orc of the White Mountain (see *Horse-lords of Rohan,* page 123) for every companion, and one Goblin Archer for every two companions (see *The One Ring*, page 240), but in the narrow mountain passes a small number can hold off, or even defeat, a larger force. The Orcs ambush them at dusk on the second day, hoping to use the coming darkness to press their advantage or scurry away as needed.

The company must make successful **Awareness** tests to avoid being ambushed, as described on page 167 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*. If not spotted, the Orcs pen the company with a volley of arrows and thrown spears. The Orcs have arrayed themselves along the canyon walls in such a way as to make fighting them exceedingly difficult. Regardless as to whether the ambush was successful or not, the Orcs have the advantage of terrain – the company are *moderately hindered* throughout any combat.

The Orc Ambush is not intended to cause much damage, it is meant to delay the company. If they fail to spot it and get into a struggle, they lose 2 successes from those accumulated in their prolonged **Hunting** action.

Additionally, unless they slaughter the Orcs to the last, Orc scouts will bring word to Malthor of their pursuit. If they successfully make their initial **Awareness** tests, they can go around the canyon without incident.

A Fork in the Road

Late in the third day of the pursuit, the company comes across another set of tracks that intersect the ones they have been following. These tracks are more numerous

The Road Less Travelled

The rest of the adventure assumes that the company decides to continue their pursuit of Malthor, rather than turn back to attack the larger band. But the players might as well choose to pursue and attack the larger band of Orcs, or even give up the pursuit entirely to ride back to the Mark and bring a warning. Both of these courses of action will have dire consequences.

Chasing the Larger Band

The larger band of Orcs is not trying to cover their tracks and have left an easy to follow trail, as they are making straight for Stonegap. The company is only a few hours behind them and can easily catch up. This band of Orcs numbers well over fifty raiders: They are the minions of Gazhúr Three-Deaths, the master of the High Stone (see *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 123) and will pose a tremendous challenge for the most seasoned of Riders, as their hatred of the Eorlingas is intense. Anyone spying the large band making its way down the mountain know that an attack would be foolish in the extreme.

Give up the Pursuit and Ride Back

No one in the Mark will be happy to see the Riders come back empty handed, and less so should they bring news that another band of raiders is coming. While their actions could be regarded as prudent, they are taken as proof of cowardice and lack of honour. The player-heroes will find the difficulty of any interaction with Eorlings increased by 1 level for a year after.

than the first ones and newer. **Hunting** will determine that this second trail is from a large body of Orcs, and it is heading north down the mountain towards the village of Stonegap.

There is much debate in amongst the Riders as to what should be done about this trail. The meaning is clear: another band of raiders is about, and its size seems to pose a threat not just to the Dunlendings, but to the settlements in Westfold.

The Riders accompanying the heroes look to the companions for guidance. A choice must be made between the lives of the captives in the hands of the first band and the Dunlending village of Stonegap in the other (furthermore, if the company has witnessed the destruction of Stonegap, they realize that the Orcs, bereft of a "Dunlending" prize, will surely raid into the Mark - this is worth an additional Shadow point for anyone that didn't actively try to stop the destruction of the village.)

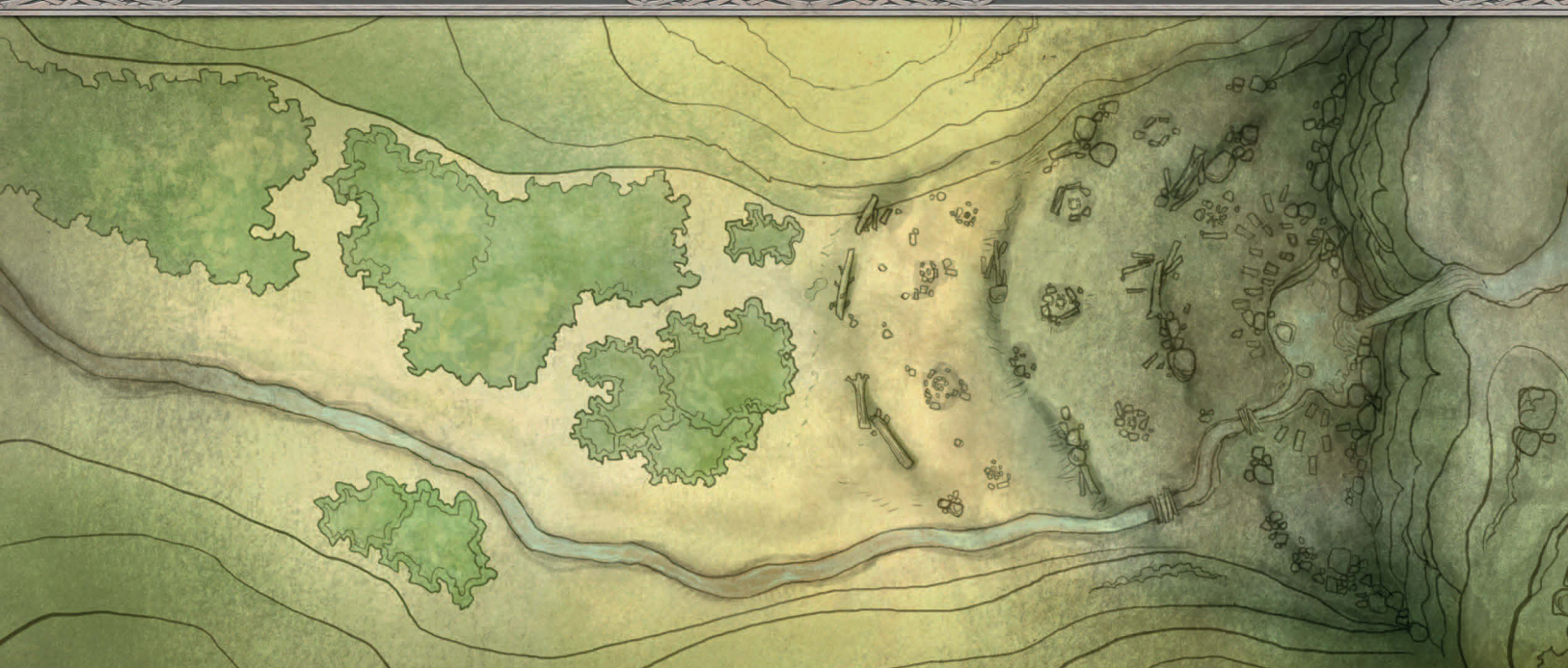
The company should keep in mind that their numbers are relatively small. They likely do not have a force large enough to take on the larger band of Orcs, and splitting their Riders up might lead to both parties failing in their missions. Whatever choice the company agrees to, their band of Riders will abide by it. If the company abandons those taken by Malthor, the Wulfings may manage to save a few of the traders from Rohan, but the majority of them will perish (receiving news of this will cause all companions to gain 1 Shadow point).

Catching the Orcs on the Trail

If the company reaches the required total of 9 successful **Hunting** rolls before three days are over, they overtake Malthor's raiders on their way to the vale. The Orcs will see them coming, and will use their prisoners much as they would if caught in the vale: Driving the captives before them, the Orcs turn back to attack the company and attempt to disperse the Riders. But their tactic won't last, and Malthor will swiftly lose control of his fractious band. The Orcs will only sustain a brief fight before grabbing whatever loot or captives they can and dispersing in a dozen directions across the mountain. An **Awareness** test can be used to pick out specific captives as they are being carried away.

- Part Four -
The Orc Camp

The Orcs have settled in a wooded vale at the foot of a towering cliff that throws a deep shade over the rearmost parts of the camp. A small spring trickles down the cliff face and forms a muddy pool at the base; around this the Orcs have thrown down their bedding.



This stop is but one of several along the way back to their caves and favoured haunts, and the state of affairs marks it so. Never ones for hygiene or much care as to their environment, the Orcs have already managed to turn a picturesque vale into a burgeoning cesspit.

The camp is formed of three concentric rings that terminate at the base of the cliff. That nearest the cliff and around the muddy pool has been claimed by the Orcs themselves. Malthor the Axe-Bitten holds court here with his closest warriors.

The next ring is composed of Dunlending slaves, with the most recent captives as well as the captured Eorlings held closest to the Orcs. The outer ring is composed of a handful of Orcs acting as sentries and serves as a both a lookout and a guard over the Dunlendings.

Attacking the Orc Camp

The Orcs are expecting trouble; in fact, they are hoping for it. Even Eorlings mounted on their swift steeds might have problems attacking such prepared and forewarned foes. Scouting out the camp and looking for the best line to charge down would be the prudent thing to do.

Scouting the Camp

The Orcs have patrols out and watchmen set; they are expecting some sort of reprisals, if only from the Wulfings if no one else. There are small patrols comprising a Goblin Archer and two Orcs of the White Mountains roaming the surrounding area. Lookouts have also been posted on three stony slopes from where they can watch over the likely approaches. Each lookout point has one Goblin Archer and one Orc of the White Mountain.

Player-heroes use **Awareness** to try to spot a patrol or pair of lookouts as they advance. A successful **Explore** roll finds them a good place to pass by unseen, and **Stealth** rolls can be attempted to hide from any passing patrols. If they are spotted, the Orcs immediately sound horns and surprise attacks become impossible.

Ambushing the Lookouts

Considering that the companions have many Riders at their orders, taking out the Orc patrols unseen may be resolved as a prolonged action requiring 6 successes against TN 16. To lead their men in such a tactic, each player is allowed to make a single **Battle** roll. If the prolonged action is achieved, all the lookouts are eliminated and the Orc camp can be attacked by surprise. If they fail, or should one roll fail with an , the Orcs are alerted.

Charging Straight In

While stopping to have a good look would have been the best plan, the player-heroes might very well want to charge straight into the camp. If the company rushes in heedlessly, the Orcs are sufficiently warned by the horns of the lookouts or patrols so as not to be ambushed. Despite this, the arrival of a war host of the Eorlingas will come as a bit of a shock, and a speedy attack will throw

Turning the Slaves

The player-heroes could attempt to turn the Dunlending prisoners upon their captors. Forfeiting of a combat action, a hero can instead attempt an Inspire roll with TN 18 (if the companions established a good reputation among the Dunlendings the difficulty is lowered to TN 16). Success convinces a small handful of slaves to seize weapons and turn upon their "masters" which yields two extra Success dice for use in the battle. A great success grants the dice and causes the Dunlendings to remove an Orc of the White Mountains and a Goblin Archer from the tally the company must defeat. An extraordinary success grants three success dice and causes the Dunlendings to overwhelm a group of Orcs, effectively removing 3 Orcs of the White Mountains and a Goblin Archer from those the company must defeat.

The Orcs have Men of the Mark amongst their captives, but they set the stout children of Eorl in cruel bonds, which they will not be able to break free of quickly enough to affect the outcome of the battle.

the Orcs into some disarray: The company may make the standard **Battle** rolls to gain combat advantage dice.

However, the Rohirrim will not be able to make charge attacks, as the Orcs have placed Dunlending prisoners throughout their lines (unless they're willing to blatantly overrun any Dunlendings: companions choosing to do so will get all charge attacks they're entitled to, but they'll also gain 5 Shadow points as they callously crush pitiful slaves beneath their horses' thundering hooves).

The Battle

Once attacked, the Orcs continue to force their Dunlending slaves forward to break up charges, keeping the bound captives from the Mark they have seized close to the cliff wall. If the lookouts were not successfully slain, they will take random shots at the companions during the fight, though they are just as prepared to flee if the battle should go poorly.

The key to the entire battle is Malthor Axe-Bitten. If Malthor is taken down, his troops will break and run. Otherwise, the company will have to deal with three Orcs of the White Mountain and one Goblin Archer per companion – the rest will be tied up fighting their band of Riders. If they manage to kill all their opponents, or Malthor, then the Orcs are broken and they flee.

Malthor, the Axe-Bitten

Malthor is a notable chieftain among the Orcs of the White Mountains, though he lacks the stature of Gazhúr Three-Deaths, a fact which galls him to no end. Malthor's sobriquet was earned when a Rider of Rohan nearly clove his face in twain. His wound left him with a twisted evil grin and an unyielding hatred of the Eorlingas. Malthor the Axe-Bitten is a cunning warrior, a vicious battler against Men, and a terror on the battlefield.

Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
20	5
Parry	Armour
4 +3	3d
Skills	
Personality, 4	Survival, 2
Movement, 4	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Black-sword	4
Spear	3
Special Abilities	
Hate Sunlight	Snake-like Speed
Hatred (Riders of Rohan)	Commanding Voice
Hideous Toughness	-

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Black-sword	7	10	18	Disarm
Spear	4	9	12	Pierce

- Part Five -
Distant Kin

Once Malthor the Axe-Bitten has been defeated and the captives have been rescued, the company has a group of some 30 traders and farmers from the Mark to deal with, along with over a hundred Dunlending slaves. As the company prepares to make their way down the mountain, a large body of riders can be seen swiftly approaching from the south-west.

These riders are a wild-looking bunch, dressed and mounted much like the Rohirrim, but some also sport war paint and other accoutrements in the manner of the Dunlendings. There is no doubt that this is a party of Wulfings, but their purpose and intent is unknown.

When the company spots the Wulfings, a sharp debate boils up amongst the Eorlings. Some call for arms and swift counter to those they consider brigands, bandits, and traitors. Others say to stay spears and wait and see what happens.

Once again, the followers of Cenric and the followers of Éogar quickly take opposing sides and the debate threatens to split the warriors or worse, bring them to blows. An **Awe**, **Inspire**, **Persuade**, or even **Song** test may bring the warriors about.

There is only time for one test though to quiet the fractious warriors. Failure means the company is distracted and cannot make **Insight** rolls in order to martial their wits and gain encounter advantage dice when dealing with the Wulfings.

The Wulfings Approach

The Wulfings have been hard on the trail of massive band of Orc raiders and certainly didn't expect to find the companions. They are led by Déormód, nephew to Frána, Lord of the Wulfings (see *Red Days Rising*, page 37). Déormód spurs his riders near and gazes upon the company.

"Ho there intruders, you are on land ruled by the lord of Frecasburg. I demand you make an accounting of yourself and your presence here. Make your words swift and true, for I will suffer no lies or sly speech, especially not from trespassers."

Set Tolerance

Déormód respects actions over words, so the initial Tolerance is based on the highest Valour amongst the company. Déormód is no friend to the Rohirrim, so Tolerance is automatically reduced by 1.

Tolerance is reduced by an additional 1 if Déormód has cause to distrust the company specifically; however, if the company saved Gwya, raise Tolerance by 3 as she rushes forward to hail her brother-in-law and speak well of the player-heroes valiant efforts even in defense of Dunlendings.

Introductions and Interaction

The player-heroes will need to be clear and honest in their speech, so **Awe** and **Persuade** will be the best skills to use. Déormód is alert for treacherous words, so any use of **Riddle** will automatically fail.

Parley with the Wulfings

The player-heroes must roll a number of successes to convince Déormód of their sincerity. The more successes they roll before the Tolerance is exceeded, the more Déormód is convinced.

1. (Narrow Success): Déormód believes their story, but commands the Rohirrim to depart their lands at once. He offers no aid at all.

2-4. (Success): Déormód believes their story. He notes that the settlement of Stanshelf is a two-days ride, and states that the Lady Edelyn would likely be willing to help them. When the Orcs come he offers to delay them, but he and his troops will not fight alongside men of the Mark.

5-6. (Great Success): Déormód is moved by their story and offers the Wulfings' assistance in getting all the Eorlings back to the Mark. His warriors will fight alongside the company, and risk their lives to protect the folk of the Mark.

7+. (Extraordinary Success): Déormód is deeply moved by the company's heroism. He offers the Wulfings' aid

as the previous entry and declares that he will discuss the company's courage with Frana, Lord of Frecasburg – something which could have large future repercussions. (See *Woes of Winter,* on page 106)

The Company Fails to Convince Déormód or Chooses to Fight

Fresh from the fight with the Orcs, the company and their warriors are likely in a poor state to take on the Wulfings, for they are many, fresh, and unwounded. There are two Wulfing Riders for every companion (see *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 118) and enough Wulfings to engage the rest of the Eorlingas.

The final outcome of the battle depends on the actions and success of the company. Once half of their Wulfing adversaries have been vanquished, the rest wheel off and ride off to safety.

This is not the end of the threat though, for the Wulfings are not ones to let an intruder defeat them on their own land. Instead, a pair of Wulfings will be dispatched to ride back to Frecasburg and report the incident.

Meanwhile, the remaining Wulfings will do all they can to make life hard for the companions, pushing rocks down to block the path off the mountain, taking wild shots from ridges and then riding off, driving away game, polluting water sources and setting up constant noise at night to keep the Rohirrim from getting a good night's rest.

Increase the TN of any Fatigue tests the company must take until they return to the Westfold. Any Hazard episodes that occur during this time are likely to involve further conflict with the Wulfings.

– Part Six –
Hunters and Hunted

There is more than one band of Orc raiders abroad on the mountain, and the larger band spotted earlier has doubled back. Gazhúr Three-Deaths himself leads the largest band, and he desires nothing more than captive Riders of Rohan.

Shortly after the encounter with Déormód and his Wulfing Riders (or *during* if they end up fighting) one of the lookouts (either a Rider or a Wulfing if they joined forces) blows a horn and waves her spear to get the attention of the gathered Riders. She points off to the north-east and then scurries quickly down from her high post.

"Riders to horse! Not more than a league from here is another band of Orcs, a massive horde, led by a dark brute. They are making their way up the mountain in broad daylight, confident in their numbers and lustful in their hunt for prey."

If the player-heroes go to see for themselves, they spot a large number of Orcs marching up the mountain trails. A successful roll of **Awareness** will also spot two smaller bands approaching from the south-west and south-east.

Within a very short amount of time they will be surrounded if they don't act. Hampered by the many freed captives,

If the Company battles with the Wulfings

If the company fights with the Wulfings, Gazhúr Three-Deaths will take advantage of the situation to launch his attack during the battle to seize as many captives as they can.

Both Wulfings and Eorlings must now turn and fight side by side for their very survival, for no matter the causes of the conflicts between Men, the fight against Orcs takes precedence. In such a case, the company only has the time to either fight in the Vale or promptly attempt to flee and the Wulfings will do nothing to aid them. See Part Six for details on the attackers.

the company must make a tough choice: *stand and fight,* or *flee to safety*.

Stand and Fight!

If the company chooses to stand and fight the Orcs, they would be advised to seek a defensible location. The wooded vale where Malthor the Axe-Bitten made camp is hidden, but not terribly well defended. There is enough time to retreat to a better position or fortify a location, but little beyond that before the Orcs arrive.

Retreat to a Better Position or Fortify a Location

A successful roll of **Battle** will find the company a better position to fight from. Standing firm on top of a knoll, with their backs to a cliff wall, or even defending a narrow pass or trail will certainly give the company a slight advantage.

The Orcs will only be able to attack from one direction, and the freed captives can be protected.

Against such a solid position, the Orcs will throw themselves in **three** waves, and then retire, heading down the mountain to raid easier targets.

Stand and Fight in the Vale

The vale where the Orc raiders camped offers little in the way of defence. True, lookouts can be posted on the surrounding cliffs and peaks, and the cliff wall prevents anyone from sneaking up from behind. However, as the company has no doubt found for themselves, the wooded vale provides cover, but not barrier, to approaching enemies.

There is a wide enough area at the base of the cliff to mount a charge, and for any Riders of Rohan the ability to fight mounted is likely a major tactical consideration.

The Orcs will attack the vale in **five** waves before giving up and seeking softer prey.

Facing the Raiders of Gazhúr Three-Deaths

Gazhúr Three-Deaths leads a large band of raiders, and as the master of the High Stone, he commands lesser Orc chieftains as well. Together there are dozens upon dozens of Orcs converging on the company and their Riders, a force the Eorlings (even if buoyed by the Wulfings) should be wary to face.

When they attack, the Orcs do so in a number of waves dependant on where the company chose to make their stand. Each wave consists of two Orcs of the White Mountains and one Goblin Archer for every player-hero. If the company has allied with the Wulfings, they face only one Orc of the White Mountains and a Goblin Archer for each player-hero.

Gazhúr Three-Deaths (found in *Horse Lords of Rohan,* page 123) himself does not personally wade into combat. He drives his forces before him and into the spears of the Rohirrim, but he marks the player-heroes well and remembers them for a later reckoning...

Flee for Stanshelf

A **Lore** test will reveal that the nearest safety for the companions is the settlement of Stanshelf, a two-day ride around the mountain that passes over the steep sloping ridges which form the very ribs of the White Mountains. To have any chance of making it with the captives from the Mark, the company would have to abandon the Dunlending slaves to their fate, unless they have the help of the Wulfings.

If Déormód is willing to help with the Dunlendings, the player-heroes are not responsible for their fates. If not and the company abandons them after saving them from the Orcs, all gain 5 Shadow points.

In order to get all of the former captives to Stanshelf, the companions' and their warriors' steeds will all be burdened with extra riders. All player-heroes will have to take a Fatigue test. Failure indicates both an increase in Fatigue and that they've fallen behind. Anyone who falls behind will have to contend with the leading elements of the raiders and face a sharp fight with one Orc of the White Mountains per companion.

Many of the captives, already worn down by the wild run of the Orcs and their mistreatment at their hands, might not be able to make it at all. Each day, a successful roll of **Inspire** will be needed to keep them moving, or a **Song** test might lift their hearts to press on one more step.

If captives cannot be motivated, some fall behind and will be recaptured by the Orcs if a player-hero does not go back for them.

Stanshelf

Stanshelf is a settlement perched in a valley in the lower slopes of the White Mountains. Not as crude as the holdings of the Dunlendings or the Wulfings, Stanshelf comprises a long hall defended by a cliff and a stout wall, scattered farms, and broad pastures indicative of a prosperous lord of Rohan. For the fleeing player-heroes it seems like a miraculous respite from the trials of the past few days.

As the company approaches, a pair of brightly mailed warriors on swift horses canter up.

"Hail and well met, at least to some of you. These are the lands and people of Edelyn, Daughter of Trumbold. Come as friends and be welcome, come as foes and be driven back into the mountains from which you sprung."

The two Riders escort the company to the hall, but the rest of their warriors must remain in the fields with the freed captives and, if they are still with them, any Dunlendings and the Wulfings.

The company is then brought to the hall and asked to dismount and make themselves presentable. Once this has been accomplished, they are brought inside to speak with Edelyn of Stanshelf.

Before they enter her house, Riders loyal to Éogar quietly point out that Edelyn is a Wulfing with delusions of grandeur, a wild raider and savage who styles herself a shieldmaiden of Rohan.

Meeting with Edelyn of Stanshelf

The company is brought into a very familiar scene, the hall of a chieftain of Rohan. Peaked eaves rise high above and are carved and painted in tasteful tones. The sides of the hall are lined with benches, and the central tables have been pushed aside to make room for the day's activities. There are pegs to hang one's cloak, shield and weapons upon, and a place by the door for spears to be propped up yet be ready at hand. A low fire burns in the fire pit and sends a thin column of smoke to the well-thatched roof. Two large wolfhounds lounge near the fire, both with hair silver tipped in age. They barely raise their heads as the strangers enter.

At the head of the hall benches have been cleared and brought out for the guests, and a small table has been set up with coarse black bread, apples, honey and ale. The mistress of this hall, a woman nearing middle age of Rohirrim ancestry, sits at the head on a raised platform.

"Welcome honoured guests, for we have few guests from Westfold, only those who ride out of the mountains dressed for war and haggard from trail and battle. Sit and rest, take bread and ale and the fruit of our trees and tell me what brings you to my lands."

Set Tolerance

Edelyn values heroic deeds over lofty words, and so the initial Tolerance of the encounter is based on the highest Valour amongst the company. Increase Tolerance by the highest Standing of any Rider of Rohan. If there are any

Dunlendings present, for whatever reason, lower the Tolerance by 2.

Introductions and Interaction

Despite her rough treatment at their hands, Edelyn admires the Rohirrim – both **Awe** and **Song** used to invoke their glories are likely to gain the most traction with her. The difficulty for such rolls is one level less.

If the company tell Edeyln about fighting against Gazhúr Three-Deaths, they will gain an automatic success. She is the sworn enemy of the Orc chieftain and would gladly learn what she can about him and his plans.

Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter

If the company fails to get any successes, Edeyln is disgusted with their cowardice. The player-heroes and all with them are not welcome in Stanshelf, and must leave immediately.

1. (Narrow Success): Edeyln is not impressed by the company's willingness to help Dunlendings, nor their flight from Orcs. Any Wulfings and Dunlendings must leave within the hour, or there will be a battle. The company and their warriors can stay a single night, but must move on in the morning; however, she is willing to take on the captives from Rohan, whom she and her warriors will escort back to Helm's Deep in due course.

2-4. (Success): The player-heroes, their troops, and the former captives are welcome to stay and rest for a few days. Edelyn will send her Riders forth to scour the mountains for signs of Orc raiders, for Stanshelf has suffered from the attacks of the Orcs of the High Stone in the past. Any Wulfings are allowed to stay one night – under guard – but must move on the next day. Any Dunlendings will be allowed provisions, but are expected to leave within a day.

5-6. (Great Success): Edeyln is thrilled by the company's courage, deeming them "proper" Eorlings. She personally leads her own éored to drive off any Orcs, and escorts the company, their troops, and the former captives back to the Westfold. If the Wulfings are present, she is civil to Déormód, improving relations in the future. She allows any Dunlendings to stay on her lands and even feeds them.

7+. Extraordinary Success: Edeyln could not be more impressed with the player-heroes. In addition to the results of the previous entry, Stanshelf becomes eligible for becoming a Sanctuary for the company.

> **New Fellowship Undertaking – Open Stanshelf as a Sanctuary**
>
> If the company were particularly successful in their treatment with Edelyn, they may choose to open it as a Sanctuary in the next Fellowship phase.

– Epilogue –
Return to Grimslade

The company, no doubt weary and battle stained, must eventually make their way back to Grimslade. There they find that the two marshals have not yet completed the peace-making that Thengel King has ordered.

The Honour of the Eorlingas

The company returns to Grimslade, no doubt with wounds and the honoured dead slung over their horses' backs, likely to both celebration and sorrow. The two marshals, their faces showing pain at the losses sustained against the Orcs but broken here and there with pride at the comportment of their kinsmen, grimly stand to opposite sides of the procession riding into Grimslade.

The player-heroes are encouraged to tell of their deeds, after they have had a chance to unsaddle their horses and get some food and drink, of course. Their choices greatly influence how their tale is received. A tale of valour and courage in the face of terrible foes, especially if it resulted in the rescue of captives from the Mark, goes over well.

Blood shed together does not go unacknowledged – if the warriors from the Westfold and Eastfold fought together well against the Orcs, it helps reduce the bitterness between the forces of the two marshals considerably. If the company had difficulty directing the two sides against the common foe, some recriminations doubtless come up

in the telling, which doesn't help much with the peace-making process. These repercussions, positive or negative, come up in the adventure, *The Woes of Winter.*

The Fate of the Captives

If the captives from the Mark were saved, they return to their homes, offering many thanks to the player-heroes. The company may find help from unexpected quarters throughout Rohan for years to come, for everyone they saved also has kin who spread the tale of the company's courage.

If the companions saved Widhelm the Shrewd, the following year, he presents them with a set of magnificent mounts – each of the player-heroes is given a courser (*steda* in the tongue of the Eorlingas) with one Quality of the player's choice. (See pages 134-135 of *Horse-lords of Rohan* for further details.)

The Doom of the Dunlendings

While the Marshals care little about the Dunlendings the company may or may not have saved, anyone living west of the Fords of Isen certainly do. If the player-heroes went out of their way to rescue the Dunlending slaves, they return home to speak of the courageous warriors who freed them.

All of the company's interactions with the folk of the West-march in the future are likely to go a bit smoother. In cases where they've been identified by Dunlendings who know their history, encounters should be lowered in difficulty one level for the next year. Thereafter, unless they do something to destroy their reputation, folk of the West-march will at least listen to what they have to say.

If the company impressed Déormód, his praise will stand them in good stead with the Wulfings in the future. The Wulfings will come to the aid of the Eorlingas during the events of *Woes of Winter.*

If Gazhúr Three-Deaths and his raiders were not defeated, the Orcs continue to raid and pillage the West-march until a combined force of Dunlendings and Wulfings under the leadership of Déormód drives them back into the White Mountains.

The carnage is great, and although the Riddermark need not fear Dunlending raiders for some time, the Dunlendings themselves have suffered much. The player-heroes cannot expect any reward from that quarter, though amongst certain villages they will be remembered as heroic rescuers.

the woes - of winter -

- **When:** This adventure is set in the winter of 2961, but could be set during any winter between 2960 and 2970, following the events depicted in *Below the Last Mountain*.

- **Where:** The adventure begins at Edoras before taking the company into Westfold.

- **What:** A great gathering of the Eorlingas is to take place at Edoras at the invitation of the King. There the King would end the feud between his two marshals with a wedding between their families.

- **Why:** As the company has been involved in trying to settle the feud between the two marshals, they have been asked to be present at what will be, hopefully, the end of it.

- **Who:** Thengel King has set to formalise the truce between his two feuding marshals, Éogar the Second Marshal and Cenric the Third Marshal. This union is to be sealed through the marriage of Esmund of Eastfold and Mildryd Shielding of Westfold.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into five parts, which begin and end at Edoras.

Part One - A Gathering of Rivals

The company joins the gathering of Eorlingas at Edoras for the wedding between Mildryd Shielding of Westfold and Esmund of Eastfold. The two households remain apart but tensions mount and threaten to put an end to the truce and the wedding. Thengel King summons the company and asks them to help avert any bloodshed.

Part Two - The Murder of Ceorl the Bold

The morning before the wedding, Ceorl the Bold, a rider in the service of Cenric the Third Marshal, is found dead outside Edoras. Cenric claims this is clearly the work of Éogar or one of his followers. The two marshals look as if they will come to blows in the King's own hall. The company must solve this murder if there is any hope to avert a civil war.

Part Three - The Bride's Horse

The night before the wedding the bride and groom drink with their closest companions. Someone puts forth the idea that an ancient tradition of bridal kidnapping be attempted. Deep in their cups, none can see the folly of attempting to kidnap Mildyrd Shielding (a mighty warrior indeed). The player-heroes need to placate the groom's party before the jape escalates.

Part Four - Fell Tidings

News arrives that an army of Orcs and Dunlendings led by Gazhúr Three-Deaths has crept over the mountains and is raiding the Westfold Vale. The messenger is kin to Éogar, and Cenric wastes no time claiming this is a ruse. The player-heroes must scout out this new threat and report back, providing a reason for the marshals to stand together. Thengel King summons his two marshals and their households to confront the threat. However, just as they have clashed in arms, Éogar and Cenric clash over how to turn those arms to the protection of the Riddermark. The company must take the reins and lead where their marshals cannot.

Part Five - Red Fell the Snow

Battle is joined against the forces of Gazhúr Three-Deaths, before the gates of Edoras if at least a marshal can be convinced to follow the King's will, or before Aldburg days later, in the midst of an invasion that threatens to mar the Riddermark beyond repair.

The Eye of Mordor

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules presented in Rivendell, any revelation episodes occurring during this adventure are likely to revolve around renewed bitterness between the marshals' households, suddenly revealed traitors, or enemies attacking from an unseen quarter.

- Part One -
A Gathering of Rivals

After a year or so of intense negotiations, the Second and Third Marshals of the Riddermark have agreed to a peace. The form that this peace will take is the marriage of Mildryd Shielding, the captain of the Second Marshal's éored, and Esmund, the nephew of Cenric the Third Marshal. This union would make the two factions kin, and thus end the feud between them. Furthermore, both marshals have agreed to pay a compensation for the losses inflicted to each side so far, though both claim that the amount the other is paying is far too low given the offences and deaths caused by the feud.

The leaders of the two factions, as well as their personal armies, families, retainers and hangers-on will be staying for most of the winter in Edoras as guests of the King. The price the King is paying, in both political capital, and in the more prosaic matter of food and drink, will be greatly recouped should peace come to Rohan.

The risk is great, though, for both king and the kingdom. If a lasting peace cannot be made here, under the King's own roof, what hope is there for Rohan?

What if the Wedding was Never Arranged?

If the company failed to arrange the marriage of Mildryd and Esmund in *Red Days Rising*, the marshals are still gathered for their wedding because the king has since commanded that this peace be made.

Mildryd and Esmund remain quietly willing to be married, but they also have their pride, and the fact that they've been ordered to wed by their respective lords chafes, adding to the tension.

Whom do you Serve?

This question is central to the entire story of *Woes of Winter*. The player-heroes may be loyal to the king or give their allegiance to the Mark itself, or they may have allied themselves with one or the other of the feuding marshals.

If the company have begun to officially serve as agents of the King, their Standing effectively counts as one higher; however, being clearly on the side of the King means that in certain situations the role of the company changes. The companions are no longer outsiders uninvolved in the feud without a stake in its outcome; they are agents of the man who wants to see it end. It also means that those who oppose the King, which may mean both marshals, have little reason to entirely trust the companions. Raise the difficulty of any interactions with factional partisans by one level and lower the Tolerance of such encounters by 1.

A Summons from the King

Assuming they have ably served the King in at least one adventure, the companions will be invited to attend the wedding. This is a great honour, for not only does it show the esteem that Thengel King holds for them, but also gives the player-heroes an opportunity to enjoy a winter as guest of the monarch, with a place in the Golden Hall for them until the last guests leave. No cold camp or damp stable for the company this year, for this winter they feast in the warm glow of Meduseld!

When the company arrives in Edoras, they are escorted to the Golden Hall, given a chance to refresh themselves, and then presented to Thengel.

"Welcome to my hall. I have sent for you because the wedding of Esmund and Mildryd Shielding is upon us and I need trusted people to ensure that no feud mars the peace. I do not ask you to patrol the streets or guard any hall; those are duties my guard are more than capable of. No, there are many tasks that need doing which require steady hands, but more importantly, calm hearts. I need you to help with the wedding preparations, but more importantly, I need you to steer the followers of my sullen marshals away from violence. Distract them, occupy them, keep the peace. Can you do this?"

Presuming the companions have already played through several of the previous adventures in *Oaths of the Riddermark*, the households of both marshals will be known to them by now. Throughout the days leading up to the wedding, the company must thread the difficulties of getting their tasks done while reducing tensions amidst the guests.

Friendly Rivals

It might be entirely possible that as a result of the actions of the company in *Red Days Rising*, and *Below the Last Mountain*, the tensions of the feud may be far lower than is presented here. If this is the case, the Loremaster should keep in mind that no single act, no lucky happenstance, and certainly not a season or two of peace, can fully wipe away the pain and anger of decades of feuding. The marshals might put on a better show of ending the feud and reconciling, but their followers are lesser men and women, and some might willingly, gleefully even, give in to their hate.

A Very Long Week

Early in the week, the various followers and hangers-on of both marshals begin to arrive at Edoras. The highest-ranking lodge within Edoras itself – either in guesthouses around Meduseld, houses in town, or sturdy pavilions erected within the walls.

The majority of the households pitch large tents in the surrounding fields. Within days, Edoras is filled with Riders and their families, eating, drinking and milling about. The chance of tensions boiling over increases as the week rolls on, without the efforts of the player-heroes.

During the week leading up to the wedding, the companions are going to be kept very busy indeed. The various player-heroes will each have to decide how they will spend each of their days, whether at one of three tasks for the wedding - *Hunting Game, Driving Cattle, Picking Flowers* (see *Wedding Preparations*, below) – or if they will mingle amidst the various Eorlings filling Edoras, keeping an eye out for trouble: The section on page 110 lists various events likely to cause animosity that will crop up during the week, which the Loremaster can employ as they see fit.

The company's success at keeping the peace and helping in the preparations will be evaluated at the end of the week to determine the tension level in Edoras going into the next section of the adventure.

Wedding Preparations

The activities described below exemplify the tasks the companions can select if they wish to help in the preparations for the event.

Should they think to propose such a thing, the companions can attempt to enlist the help of some of the many Eorlings who are waiting for the marriage in dangerous idleness. A single roll of **Awe**, **Inspire**, or **Persuade** can be attempted

each day regardless of the numbers of companions, a success indicating that one or more Eorling has joined them. Each preparation task described below indicates the result of bringing someone along.

Hunting Game

While the King's larder has already been stocked with dried, smoked and pickled beef, pork and mutton, fresh game will be welcome. Already the small folk of Edoras have spread out across the fields and pastures and brought in every rabbit, hare and squirrel they could find. Something more is needed, something impressive to sit on a spit over the fire and say to all that the King has set forth a fine table, even if only the lords and chieftains of the Rohirrim are to get a taste.

Three options present themselves: a fine stag, a heavy boar, or a bear thick with winter's fat. All three present a problem; for the deer found on the plains are rare, and not terribly impressive due to their small stature. Larger stags can be found in the mountains, but tracking them across the dells and highlands might prove too lengthy a hunt. A boar would serve well, but most of the boars in Rohan are far to the east in the Everholt and are fractious foes at best. Bears are unheard of near Edoras, unless one climbs up into the White Mountains.

- Each half-day spent seeking game allows for a roll of **Hunting** (TN 16, as it is winter). A success brings a quarry within sight of the hunters, and the chase can begin. The better the roll, the more magnificent the beast sighted – a success results in a deer, a great success a boar and an extraordinary success a bear. A second roll must then be passed to catch the beast. A failure on either roll results in the hunt being unsuccessful for now – another roll may be attempted, but this will take the companion another half-day. A failed roll producing an however, results in an injury – the companion loses a Success die's worth of Endurance.

If the company successfully brings back a stag, the task is complete. If they bring back a boar or a bear, the difficulty of interaction rolls for the rest of the week is lowered by one level. If they thought to bring a few of the feuding Riders from either camp with them and their hunt succeeds, the shared danger and victory adds 1 to their success tally.

Driving Cattle

The herds of the King graze on the snowy fields of the Folde, the King's personal demesne. This large herd, more than enough to feed the hungry mouths of Edoras, must be driven up the great West Road to the capital. Normally guarding these kine would fall to some esquires of the King's Guard, but they are fairly well occupied keeping the peace in Edoras. Cenric offered to merge the King's herd with his own and drive them to Edoras when he comes, but Thengel King is not taking any chances.

- It is sixty miles along the great West Road to where the King's drovers have gathered the herd, a gentle day's ride in better seasons, but less so in winter. The journey will take two days to ride to the gathering point, but a further three days to drive the cattle back to Edoras. The companions will need to pass two Fatigue tests at TN 12 during the journey. While the drovers take care of moving the cattle, any player-heroes accompanying them must keep a sharp eye out for danger.

If a Hazard episode occurs, it will come from either inclement weather or the cattle themselves. A sudden overnight snowfall might threaten to bury the camp, or deepen the snow cover and thus make the journey longer (keep in mind that the wedding is planned at the end of the week, player-heroes arriving too late will be at a disadvantage). A sudden thawing might bring warmer weather, but it will turn the tracks along the great West Road to mud, slowing progress and threatening to bog down cattle.

The cattle themselves are not particularly clever. A Hazard episode might mean that a number of cattle have wandered off and will need to be found and driven back using **Athletics**. If the company brought some of the feuding Riders with them, successfully bringing the cattle back adds 1 to their success total at the end of the week.

Picking Flowers

By tradition, the bride wears a headdress of garlands, but there is not a great plentitude of flowers to be gathered in the midst of winter. However, on the lower slopes of the White Mountains there grows a flowery shrub known in the Mark by the name of ice-spear. This low-lying plant grows in dense clumps along the sunny side of slopes; it flowers in the winter, producing short green shoots capped

with bright blue flowers. The Queen herself desires that some Riders make the short trip south into the mountains and gather baskets of ice-spears.

It should take a full day to ride to the lower slopes of the White Mountains to the south, gather the flowers and ride back. The company will need to leave in the morning and will likely not get back until late in the afternoon or early evening. The ride will be a cold one, as the wind tends to come down from the mountains in frigid blasts and gusts.

- Locating a patch of ice-spears is not a difficult task; a companion who makes a successful roll of **Hunting** or **Explore** (or who has an appropriate trait, such as *Gardening* or *Herb-lore)* should be able to find some; however, ice-spear often grows far up on the side of cliffs, growing out of the crevices in the rock and spreading far out of reach. Scaling the cliff face requires **Athletics**. A failure means the player-hero is unable to reach the ice-spears, even after several hours of climbing. Each success results in enough ice-spears gathered to fill one basket. Should a roll be failed with an , the companion falls from the cliff into the rock strewn snow bank below, losing a Success die's worth of Endurance.

It will take three people to gather a full load of flowers in time for the company to return to Edoras before sunset. Successfully returning three baskets of ice-spears adds 2 to the success total at the end of the week. Failure subtracts 1 success.

The Week's Trials

Each day of the week, something untoward occurs, and the Loremaster may present one trial each day, choosing from the examples below in any order. Companions not out performing Wedding Preparations tasks can take part in a day's Trial. (If all player-heroes are busy, automatically subtract 1 from their successes at the end of the week when determining the tension level).

The player-heroes will generally have to deal with rowdy Eorlings, though how they do so can vary wildly depending on circumstances and their choices.

- Trials are typically resolved with a skill test suggested by the player. A success eases the tension and keeps things friendly; however, a great or extraordinary result actively lowers the overall tension level adding 1 to the success tally at the end of the week.

- A failure subtracts 1 from the week's final success tally, and a failure with an additionally increases the difficulty of any further rolls by one level (TN +2).

Trial 1. Horsing About

Horsemanship contests are popular amongst the Rohirrim. Speed is just one manner in which the skill of a rider and mount can be tested: A swift horse is a fine one, a strong horse is a good one, but a smart horse is a thing of wonder. Of course, proving one's skills by recklessly riding drunk through the streets of Edoras is unwise...

The player-heroes come upon a group of Riders from East and West jeering one another on to increasingly greater, and more dangerous, feats of riding. Talking them down may not work, but outriding them certainly might...

The gathered Rohirrim are a fractious lot, and with the close confines and imposed limitations of winter, not to mention the overcrowded nature of Edoras in the days leading up to the wedding, chance encounters between bitter enemies are likely. Two rivals from East and West bump into each other in the street, and a nasty flyting contest begins (see page 24).

While using **Awe**, **Inspire**, or **Persuade** to get the flyting parties to calm down and move on once they've said their piece would work, a more daring companion may contrive to allow both sides to let off steam by letting the flyting occur, as everyone knows that one is not to take the insults in a flyting too seriously. Unfortunately this is dangerous, as words can swiftly lead to blows if not carefully managed. If the player-heroes encourage a full blown flyting contest, raise the difficulty of reining it in by two levels (TN +4). If the hero succeeds, add 2 to the success tally at the end of the week.

Trial 2. Sharp Words

When the Eorlingas gather, they like nothing more than to boast of their exploits. A certain amount of exaggeration is expected, even encouraged, but a friendly brag made in jest can swiftly turn dangerous if accusations of lying follow it.

The player-heroes come upon a gathering where a drunken warrior is on the edge of saying something far too rash to her rivals. The companions will have to carefully redirect the conversation, perhaps with boasts of their own, lest it turn violent.

Trial 3. "Friendly" Competition

A noble has encouraged warriors from both East and West to participate in a contest of prowess. There are challenges to see who can lift, run, and carry the largest load, jump over a bonfire, and scale an ice-slick wall.

While the contests start relatively smoothly, the later competitions involve spear throwing and archery, something the Companions may wish to keep a close eye on. Failure could mean an "accident" with repercussions.

Trial 4. Prank Gone Astray

A prank between West and East has gotten of hand. Someone started by filling the boots of a sleeping rival with snow, and after a few turns the situation has escalated to a favourite horse's coat having been dyed a bright yellow. The player-heroes must intervene, but with subtlety, as after all "it's only a prank"...

Trial 5. Sheer Boredom

In the early winter, with little to do, warriors often resort to drinking to soothe their boredom. As Edoras fills and the wedding nears, the gathered Rohirrim need to be distracted, lest they come up with ways to entertain themselves that break the peace. The player-heroes come upon a large group of Riders, deep in their cups, bored by the tedium of waiting, and itching to start a brawl.

Lore, **Riddle**, or **Song** could all serve as proper distractions. **Craft** can be used as well, for the Eorlings respect good workmanship and many amongst them would be willing to spend hours watching a master craftsman at her trade. Heroes from farther afield might hold a dozen Eorlingas enthralled simply by telling them stories of their homelands and people.

Evaluating the Tension

The player-heroes efforts over the week determine the level of tension in Edoras going forward – which influences many events over the next sections. The more successes they accumulated, the better natured everyone is.

Characters that had already established good relations with the warriors of both Marshals, say, during the adventure *Below the Last Mountain*, add 2 successes to the tally. Those that failed to do so subtract 1.

If they failed to gain any successes all week, a brawl happens in the street and several warriors from both sides are injured badly. The difficulty of all interactions going forward is raised by 2 levels (TN +4).

1. (Narrow Success): The pressure is easily felt on the streets of Edoras – the city is ready to combust. All go about with their hands on their sword-hilts. Voices are raised in anger far more often than merriment. The difficulty of all interactions is raised by 1 level (TN +2) going forward.

2-4. (Success): While there have been some brief altercations, the feud has been successfully suppressed. The majority of the Eorlings in Edoras are in a fair mood and ready for the ceremony to begin. Folk from East and West are cordial to one another. All social interactions going forward are resolved in the standard manner.

5-6. (Great Success): The King is well pleased. Warriors from both marshals' camps have begun drinking together with more jesting than brawling. The Eorlings are excited for the wedding and looking forward to the grand feast to accompany it. The difficulty of all interactions is lowered by 1 level going forward (TN -2).

7+. (Extraordinary Success): The streets of Edoras are filled with song and all are in a festive mood. In addition to the effect of the previous entry, each companion automatically gets 1 bonus success die at the start of any new social interaction for use during it, for the rest of the adventure.

-Part Two -
The Murder of Ceorl the Bold

The bright winter morning before the wedding is interrupted by a scream, followed by the horns of the King's Guard and a great gathering of visitors along the fence behind Cépa's House (see *Horse-lords of Rohan*, page 22). A portion of the fence has been torn down and some of the livestock are wandering out into the streets

of Edoras. Lying on top of the broken fence is the body of a dead man. The snow beneath the corpse is stained in blood, and a set of footprints lead from the scene, disappearing over a nearby fenced enclosure.

In moments Heáfod, the Doorwarden of Meduseld, pushes his way through the crowd with stern glares. Kneeling next to the body, he gently rolls it over to reveal it is Ceorl the Bold, a kinsman of Cenric's household and a famed Rider from Eastfold. Upon seeing this, several groups of Riders depart swiftly from the scene.

Sheath Your Swords

Éogar and Cenric quickly gather in Meduseld, each accompanied by a small complement of followers. They have come to Thengel King before they could be summoned, and the King is both angry and concerned for this is just the sort of thing to unravel the peace.

Cenric is the first to speak.

"Is this the peace you wish? Is this the end of bloodshed? My kinsman lies dead in the snow not more than a spear's throw from here. It should be obvious to all that this is but one more blow struck by Éogar's bandits. I would demand compensation, but this villain has yet to pay me what he owes, much less settle this new debt."

Éogar responds.

"None of my men broke the King's peace, but you dare to insult me! Fie, there is nought to what you say but vapours in the wind. Your mouth is a great spewer of waste that rivals fabled Mount Doom in its volume and wickedness."

Cenric states coldly.

"You lie."

Which is enough for Éogar to place his hand upon the hilt of his sword and prepare to draw it.

"I will pay what you deserve, Cenric, a weregild of steel!"

Heáfod, the Doorwarden of Meduseld, instantly steps between the two marshals. Thengel King rises from his seat, his face flush with anger.

"Enough! I will not have blood and blades in my own hall. I hoped reason might prevail, but I see how wrong my faith in my marshals may be. Will you agree that a murder in my own city is a business of mine? I will bring justice here, not the swift murder of fools who would spill the blood of their kinsmen, aye their kinsmen, for we are all sons of Eorl, no matter what fold we claim. Heáfod clear the hall, clear it of all these fools... those trusted folk remain."

The murmuring crowd files out under the watchful stare of the King's Guard, save the "those trusted folk" – who are the companions. Once the hall is cleared, Thengel King sits back down and motions for the company to come forward.

"All murders are grave, but this one threatens to bring a storm of bloodletting down upon us. By rights I should order the King's Guard to settle this, but I cannot. They are loyal to me and to the seat I sit, and that will cast doubt on their actions in the eyes of many. You, though, by your deeds, have the respect of both East and West. Heáfod must

look into this matter, but I want you to do so as well. Go now, and discover, for good or ill, who slew Ceorl the Bold last night."

Solving the Murder

The player-heroes will need to ask questions, follow leads and look for clues in order to solve this mystery. They had best do so quickly, as the true culprit needs to be found before the wedding can take place and the marshals grow impatient.

Ceorl was in truth murdered by his own cousin, Hild, a young shieldmaiden. Hild killed her kinsman out of greed. An ardent gambler, she has lost a great deal of her inherited wealth to the merchant Goldred. On her way to Edoras, a stranger offered her a great deal of gold if she would kill Ceorl. Desperate, for Goldred the Merchant has said he will take her horse and armour if she cannot pay her debts, Hild accepted the offer. She was given a small sack containing coins of foreign make and never saw the stranger again (if the company find these coins, they may recognise them as being of the same type found on the ill-favoured traders encountered in the Eastemnet in *Black Horses, Black Deeds*, on page 78).

Investigating the murder is treated as a prolonged action; the company must accrue 6 successes in order to find enough clues that point to Hild's guilt and motivation. However, should 3 failures be accrued first, two days pass and the two marshals leave Edoras with their households. The wedding is called off and the two marshals retreat to their own halls to prepare for a spring which will be marred by bloodletting and revenge...

The Loremaster should allow the players to handle the investigation in a way best fitting their heroes, proposing skills to test against and avenues to pursue.

- A roll of **Hunting** might be made to find Hild's tracks and follow them back to Gram the Smith's house, where Hild has stayed on occasion.
- A **Healing** test might reveal the fatal wound was a knife wound, while a Search roll will locate the bloody dagger tossed behind a woodpile to the rear of a house along the main street.
- Asking around can reveal much with a successful roll of **Awe**, **Courtesy** or **Persuade**; one could learn about Hild's gambling, about how Goldred the Merchant had loaned her money, and that Ceorl and Hild were drinking at Cépa's House that night.
- An **Awareness** test might show that Ceorl's sword never left its sheath, meaning his attacker surprised him.
- A roll of **Insight** can be used to determine when someone is lying; Hild, when questioned, will be less than truthful. Hild's dagger is missing from its sheath. She claims to have broken it while hunting and hasn't found a suitable replacement yet.

The Arrest of Hild "Kinslayer"

If the company gathers sufficient evidence in time, the player-heroes should go to Heáfod. The Doorwarden will ponder their findings before taking it to the King. Thengel King will order the arrest of Hild. Hild surrenders without a fight, confessing her crime before the King and the assembled lords of Rohan.

"With heavy heart I must now rule as to the fate of Hild Kinslayer. This Rider has committed fell crimes and for mere gold. Her sentence will be death, but as the morrow shall be a wedding I will not mar such a happy occasion with death and grief. The sentence will be carried out after Year's End."

The hall is then cleared. A successful roll of **Insight** shows that the two marshals are ashamed by their hasty words.

- Part Three - The Bride's Horse

Before sunset on the day before the wedding, Esmund and Mildryd Shielding have retired to await the morning. Whereas the bride has gone to the camp of her marshal and his followers, Esmund has gone to Cépa's House. There he and some invited companions, including the player-heroes, spend the evening before the wedding drinking, singing songs and telling tales.

The night passes convivially enough, though Esmund is fairly sombre. When asks, he says he remembers a similar night, long ago it seems. The guest of honour's brooding does little to dispel the mirth and camaraderie of the other Riders in the house. The fire is warm, the air outside is cold

and a silvery moon has risen above the White Mountains. One of the assembled Riders – it is hard to tell who in the haze of smoke from the fire and the crowded nature of the hall – makes a bold suggestion.

"In days of yore, brave warriors dared to spirit away the bride before the wedding. A jest, to lighten the mood of such a grave event! I say we do such a thing tonight, for tomorrow will see the peace, aye, the King's peace, and we might not get another chance to show those Westfold farmers what warriors truly are!"

This suggestion is passed around, and the assembled warriors of Eastfold laugh it off as far too rash. Especially considering that Mildryd Shielding is a deadly warrior in her own right, her camp is closely guarded, and in the past, all knew that such raids were in jest.

So, someone offers that they could try something equally daring instead, like stealing the bride's horse. So long as it is returned in the morning, this would surely be seen as a good-natured jest... An **Insight** test against a severe difficulty (TN 18) notes that a few of the Eastfolders, deep in their cups, think this is a very good idea indeed. Before anyone can say else, though, an amused Esmund states that he is for bed, as he has a grand battle to wage on the morrow. He leaves to laughter and soon the evening apparently draws to a close.

Proper Caution

A suspicious player-hero may wish to keep an eye on the Eastfolders, ensuring they stumble to their beds without doing anything rash. This is wise, because a group of them have indeed decided to steal Mildryd's beloved horse, Swiftmane. It will take an **Awe** or **Persuade** roll to convince them otherwise. Failure will cause the companions to have to rouse the King's Guard to stop them, or they will have to draw steel themselves. This will, of course, get back to Éogar and his followers – depending on the tension level in the town and their relationship with the company, this may mean an amusing story with hearty laughs all around... or all social interaction rolls may get 1 difficulty level higher.

The Luck of Fools

If none of the companions thought to keep an eye on the Eastfolders, they are awoken to a swift knocking on their chamber doors, long past midnight. To their surprise, a cold sober Esmund stands at their door, asking to be let in. As soon as the company is assembled, he tells them that something terrible has occurred. His foolish drunken compatriots enacted their plan and through the luck of fools, managed to pull it off, somewhat. They successfully slipped Mildryd's horse, Swiftmane, out of the Westfolder's camp blindfolded. But once they'd wrangled him back to their camp, his blindfold came astray. Swiftmane attacked, they panicked, and now, "Swiftmane is dead." Esmund shakes his head, holds his hands out in supplication.

"Was this drunken foolishness or deliberate? It matters not. I know not how to handle this. Will you help me?"

The companions now have to decide how to handle this situation and the Loremasters should certainly reward clever thinking. Insight will indicate that simply going with "the truth" will cause many, many problems. Éogar and Mildryd will doubtless demand that the perpetrators be punished. Esmund isn't certain who all was involved, as all of the Eastfolders involved in the horse-napping were drunk, and none of them are willing (or even able) to name the others.

The player-heroes may decide to concoct a good story to "explain what happened". Swiftmane's corpse is presently hidden in a tent in the Eastfolder's camp outside of Edoras. Note that even for the best of causes, purposefully lying is a 1 Shadow point misdeed. Still, for the good of Rohan, they may take such a burden upon themselves.

Finally, whatever they decide, the entire situation will be greatly improved if the company can manage to produce a new horse worthy of Mildryd Shielding. How they go about this is up to them. If their relations with Thengel King are good, they may ask for one from his stables. Otherwise, they may have to purchase or otherwise acquire one.

In the morning, Mildryd is obviously greatly upset at the loss of her horse. How the company handles the situation will greatly affect her response. At worst, her fury will carry over to her folk and Éogar, who will cause more trouble in the following section. At best, she will be sad, but mollified over the gift of a fine new steed and Éogar will be more affable.

- Part Four -
Fell Tidings

It is the day of the wedding, and hopefully through the hard work (or luck) of the company, blood has not been spilled on the streets of Edoras. The morning of the wedding promises to be a day of peace, with the bonding of not just husband and wife, but of two feuding houses. Perhaps if Esmund and Mildryd Shielding can put aside the tragedies of their pasts and start anew, so too can the people of Rohan.

Meduseld is filled beyond the Golden Hall's ability to hold all the lords, chieftains, notables, retainers, followers, hangers-on and curious watchers. The crowd spills out of the hall, crowding into the portico and down the steps to gather in the street in front. Thengel King and Queen Morwen stand at the front of the hall, flanked by the two marshals, with the other lords of Rohan arrayed around them.

Two processions of Riders approach the town, one from the camp of Westfold and the other from Eastfold. At the head of the processions rides the bride and groom, dressed in their best clothes and with their horses decorated for the occasion, and their accompanying Riders are equally magnificent. With a certain amount of solemnity – some might say hesitation – both processions make their way through up the main street to the Golden Hall.

At the foot of the steps the crowd, urged by the King's Guard, parts as the wedding party dismounts. Bride and groom, avoiding eye contact with one another, have just begun to ascend the first step when a horn is heard off in the distance. Esmund and Mildryd hesitate, and then take the next step, but are interrupted once again by a blowing horn, this time much closer.

The horn continues to sound, and the crowd turns away from the wedding procession to stare across the surrounding plains, finally settling their gaze upon a swift-moving rider coming down the great West Road. This interruption brings the King and his marshals out of the hall and onto the portico.

"What manner of foolery is this? Who interrupts this wedding?"

It is, of course, Rynelda Fast-Rider, niece to Grimborn of Grimslade and favoured messenger of the Second Marshal. She wastes no time in saying her piece, seemingly oblivious to the gathered throngs.

"My lords, I come fast with news from Elfthain, who my lord Éogar left to command Helm's Deep in his absence. A vast army of Orcs and Dunlendings have descended from the mountains across secret paths directly into the Westfold Vale, and even as we speak are making their way east down the great West Road! The army is great in number, foul Orcs and savage warriors beyond counting. We must to horse, Eorlingas, for there isn't a moment to lose!"

Bonds of Blood

The words of Rynelda cause a great stir amongst the assembled crowds, and fear is quick to turn lingering doubts into deep mistrust: Even as Éogar calls for his horse, Cenric accuses him of treachery, saying that this is clearly a ruse concocted by Éogar and his camp. The day immediately turns sour, as both marshals' followers start clamouring for the wedding to be halted. Warriors call for their horses and arms, parents hurry their children away to safety.

Silence is brought about by the pounding of the King's Guards against their shields, restoring some order. Thengel King stands before the crowd, his features darkening.

"It chills my blood to see you all ready to go at each other's throats, even when faced with such a grave threat. Aye, I would be chilled to my very core, if it wasn't for the fire of my anger! This is a threat to the Riddermark, the land you have all sworn to defend! Did you not come here under pledges of peace and fellowship? By the King's order, none of you will leave this place till given leave. Gird yourselves, but wait till summoned.

Rynelda, I do not wish to offer you insult, doubting your sincerity; however, this is a grave matter on which much turns. I shall send Riders back with you to verify your claim and report back here."

Thengel King looks at the company.

"You've long had my trust, now be my eyes. Swifter than the wind you must be."

With that the King and his family turn and go back into the hall.

The Army of Gazhúr Three-Deaths

It is a hard day's ride before the company catches sight of the invaders, and long before that they pass herdsmen and villagers fleeing east with everything they can carry, to the safety of Edoras and the valley of Harrowdale. Each player-hero will need to make a Fatigue test, increasing their Fatigue as normal if they fail.

If a Hazard is rolled, the company may fall afoul of a pair of Orcish Wolf-Riders (see page 122 of *Horse-lords of Rohan*) acting as scouts for the Orcs.

The army of Gazhúr Three-Death is a large force; hundreds of Orcs march in ragged lines under foul banners. A hundred or more Dunlending warriors march alongside and, judging by the war paint they wear they are fierce Hillmen from the heights about the Dunland Fells. At the head of the army, astride a fearsome Warg, rides Gazhúr Three Deaths, the Lord of the High Stone and sworn enemy of the Mark.

The Marshals' Debate

When they return the next day with this news, the company faces a dilemma still. The wedding is, of course, postponed, and the King calls his marshals together to plan a response; however, even in this time of crisis the feud rears its angry head. Both marshals have their own ideas as to how to defeat the army of Gazhúr Three-Deaths with the forces they have, yet those plans are directly opposed to one another.

The Eorlings gather in and around the Golden Hall to hear what is said and what is decided by their king and his marshals. Reports come in every hour, for Thengel King has dispatched several of his own Riders to keep watch over the enemy. The King listens to the counsel of his captains, but it is clear that he has his own plans on how to resolve the crisis...

The Retreat of Cenric

"We came here from Eastfold not armed for war, but ready for a wedding. The Orcs and their foul allies are too numerous and already girded for war, yet we are fewer in number here and have not brought all our best gear. I say we return to Aldburg in haste. Not to flee! Nay, but to seek battle in our own time and in our own place. The foe will come to us, and we will be waiting for them."

Éogar and the Charge of the Helmingas

"Count me as one who calls this foolish, for such a plan would give all of Westfold to the foul vermin from the mountains. We Men of Westfold are known as the Helmingas; we do not flee from a foe, we meet him head on! Give me all your best Riders and we will meet Gazhúr Three-Deaths on the road, as he still marches for Edoras, to break through his lines to reach Helm's Deep. There, I will gather my entire forces and return to the help of the King!"

Forgetful of the gravity of the moment and spurred by old habits, the two leaders and their followers both argue fiercely for their chosen strategies. Thengel King patiently listens, and then raises to face his unruly marshals.

The King's Plan

"I have tried for a long time to solve your quarrels, for I knew that a time like this would have come to Rohan. A time when our bonds of blood will either tie us together as one folk, or see ourselves united in defeat and death. Our common enemy is here, and he doesn't care for weregilds, stolen horses or broken oaths. Now, if you don't see the wisdom in making peace, then there is nothing else I can do to make you bury your recriminations. We have only one choice against the onslaught of the Orcs: meet them together in battle here, at the fords of the Snowbourn. As his forces wade through the frigid water, his numbers will count for less and we can rout him!"

Once again, the King turns to the companions and asks their counsel.

Set Tolerance

In this council of war, Wisdom and Valour are both valued, so the initial Tolerance is equal to the highest of either attribute in the company. Increase the Tolerance by the highest Standing with Rohan. Then modify it as follows:

- Increase by 1 if the marshals are here in part as a result of the company's negotiations in *Red Days Rising*.
- Increase by 1 if the companions rescued Esfled from the Dunlendings in *Red Days Rising*.
- Increase by 1 if the companions brought the brigands to justice in *Black Horses, Black Deeds*.
- Increase by 1 if the companions managed to get the warriors of both marshals to fight alongside one another in *Below the Last Mountain*.
- Reduce by 1 if the companions failed to coordinate their troops during *Below the Last Mountain*.
- Reduce by 1 if the King was forced to order the marshals to make peace here.

Finally, remember that, for good or ill, the overall tension level in Edoras affects the debate (apply the due modifiers to the difficulty of any roll).

Introduction

Here is where the companions make their arguments for why they should be heard in the war council of Rohan. The player-heroes will generally have to use **Awe**, **Inspire**, or **Persuade**, though a good argument for a different skill, **Song** perhaps, may get some leniency from the Loremaster. Their successes add to their chances to sway the marshals to their thinking.

Interaction

The aim of the company is to persuade both marshals to agree to the King's plan.

Persuading the marshals is set up as a prolonged action, requiring 6 successful rolls for each, 12 in total. Cooperation is allowed. (See **Prolonged Actions**, *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 149).

The players are free to propose which skills their characters will employ to achieve their goal, but several examples follow below.

- **Awe** can be used to remind the quarrelling marshals of the heroes' valour in the service of Rohan.
- Rolls of **Persuade** present sound arguments and ensure cool heads prevail.
- A roll of **Inspire** might be used to stir the martial prowess of the marshals, rekindling a thirst for battle against a shared foe.
- **Song** brings to the fore some of the Rohirrim's past victories, evoking the spirits of their most valorous heroes.
- A test of **Battle** brings sound tactical judgements to the table, demonstrating why the best plan is to meet the foe at the Snowbourn, where their numbers may not avail.

If the company succeeds in persuading both marshals before the Tolerance is exceeded, then they successfully convince them to join their households together and meet the enemy at the fords of the Snowbourn.

If Éogar is not convinced to abide by the King's will, the next morning will see him riding out with his own forces to break through the Orcs and reach Helm's Deep. If the company fails to persuade Cenric, the marshal will leave for Aldburg, promising to return to the rescue of Edoras.

- Part Five -
Red Fell the Snow

The Orcs and Dunlendings are pressing down the great West Road. The day dawns red in the east, and promises to be redder ere the sun sets. Faced with the oncoming army of Gazhúr Three-Deaths, the Rohirrim must stand together or die apart. What happens next depends largely on what the companions were able to accomplish the day before.

- If Éogar could not be convinced, he leaves for Helm's Deep and engages the enemy in a bloody, one-sided battle. Surprised by the enemy's numbers, the marshal is defeated and Éogar himself is slain.

- If Cenric could not be moved from his positions, he leaves for Aldburg, followed by the men of Eastfold.

If only one marshal defected, or both agreed to the King's plan, then the host of the Eorlingas will meet the enemy at the ford of the Snowbourn (see *The Battle at the Snowbourn*, below).

If both marshals deserted the King, Thengel is forced to leave Edoras for Harrowdale. Before the sun sets, his men leave the city, and the inhabitants stream out of its gates to find sanctuary in the hold of Dunharrow. (See page 122, *The Battle of Aldburg*, for how this plays out.)

The Battle of the Snowbourn

Led by Thengel King, the Eorlingas and the companions prepare to meet the horde of Gazhúr Three-Deaths on the fords of the Snowbourn, where the great West Road meets the stream. Here the King intends to assault the Orcs and Dunlendings as they cross the cold and swift waters of the stream, to reduce the disadvantage the Rohirrim suffer as far as numbers are concerned. Having succeeded in enlisting the aid of at least one of the two marshals of the Mark, the companions fight right behind the ranks of the King's Guard.

Forth Eorlingas!

To describe the companions' viewpoint, the battle is divided into 6 scenes, presented in chronological order. The actions of the companions are instrumental to the success of each scene, and, in the long run, to the outcome of the battle itself.

Each scene presents a challenge to complete, and a number of foes to face (if only one marshal is present at the battle, increase the number of foes that must be faced in every scene by 1). At the start of each scene, the Loremaster describes the situation and the player-heroes must either choose to participate in the event, or can hold themselves "in reserve". Companions in reserve recover a number of Endurance points equal to their basic Heart score.

A scene is considered to have been completed successfully if at least one companion overcomes all the tests presented and defeats all foes within six rounds of combat.

Unlikely Allies

The player-heroes might receive aid from those that they have befriended in past adventures. The company might have crossed paths with the Dunlendings previously, entreating with the Iron-folk in Wrath of the Riders, or with the Wulfings in *Below the Last Mountain*.

If oaths of friendship were sworn with the Iron-folk, they arrive in a mixed band during Scene 3, attacking the Orcs form the rear with wild war cries that ring out above the din. This reduces the number of Orcs each player-hero must fight in each scene by 1 for the rest of the battle.

If the company went out of their way to save Dunlending refugees and captives during the events of *Below the Last Mountain*, word has spread amidst the folk of the Fells and only the most vicious of the mountain tribes are interested in fighting the Forgoil this year. This reduces the number of Dunlending Raiders each player-hero must fight in all scenes by 1 for the entire battle.

If the Wulfings encountered in *Below the Last Mountain* were treated well and fought alongside the company against the Orc raiders in that adventure, they will have caught sight of the Orcs as they moved through the White Mountains and followed. Déormód himself leads a force of Wulfings who arrive at the start of the Scene 4. This reduces the number of Orcs each player-hero must fight in every scene by 1 for the rest of the battle (and stacks with the reduction caused by alliance with the Iron-folk.)

If the company fared poorly with the Dunlendings during *Below the Last Mountain*, this will have spread amidst the tribes and many may seek vengeance. If such is the case, then throughout the battle, if Dunlending Raiders are present during a scene, their numbers are increased by 1.

Scene 1: The Opening Charge

Prudence and good tactical advice would encourage the Rohirrim to wait until the Orcs are crossing the river before coming to grips with the enemy. This is not the way of the Eorlingas, for battle from horseback is in their blood. As soon as the enemy enters the shallowest part of the river to cross it, the first volleys of arrows take flight and the Riders of Rohan charge. If Cenric is present, he leads the charge with his Riders from Eastfold. If not, Éogar leads the charge.

- Companions who join the charge must pass a Riding test rolling **Athletics** against TN 18 to ford the icy stream at speed; if successful, they get to make a standard Charge attack as battle joins. Each companion faces three Orcs of the White Mountains.

Failure to complete this scene results in whichever marshal led the charge getting surrounded on an eyot in the middle of the ford. With only a handful of warriors about him, the marshal is in a desperate situation. Companions wishing to help him must choose the **Variant scene: Stand and Fight** (see box) in place of scene 2, or the marshal will be slain.

Scene 2: Struggle at the Ford

Gazhúr Three-Deaths gathers his toughest warriors and sends them in a wedge to drive impetuously across the low banks of the river. The fierce Uruks will slaughter all before them if they are not stopped before they cross the icy waters.

- The companions must make a Riding test to return to the edge of the Snowbourn in time. If they succeed, they can make a Charge attack, then fight from horseback if they wish. If they fail, they cannot make a Charge attack, and the press of bodies is such that they must dismount to fight. Three Black Uruks (page 238 of the *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*) face each companion.

If this event ends in failure, the player-heroes participating in the scene are trapped for a while, fighting the Orcs in a desperate melee that looks far too much like a last stand. Once the Black Uruks are defeated, all companions must choose the **Variant scene: Stand and Fight** in place of scene 3.

Variant scene: Stand and Fight

The player-hero fights in the midst of a raging battle. The companion must face three Orcs of the White Mountains and *one* Dunlending Raider. If successful, they are free to participate in a different scene; if they fail, they must choose this variant scene again instead. Any foes that they were fighting disappear in the swirl of melee and they face a new (unhurt) set of enemies.

Scene 3: To the Rescue

Marshals are men to lead from the front, and when Gazhúr Three-Deaths finally shows himself, whichever marshal of the Mark is present rides out with his personal éored directly towards the Orc-chieftain. At first the charge goes well, but then a black dart strikes the marshal's steed, sending horse and rider tumbling into the ground.

If the marshal is Cenric, then the companions witness as Esmund leaps from his horse and stands over his lord's body, defending him from Orcs and Dunlendings who race to claim the head of a mighty chieftain of the straw-heads; if the marshal is Éogar, then the rescuer is Mildryd Shielding of course.

- The player-heroes can attempt to rescue the marshal, and by saving him save the valiant rescuer also (and possibly save the only mean to find peace between Eastfold and Westfold). There are three Orcs of the White Mountains and two Dunlending Raiders per companion.

If this scene is completed successfully, the Riders of the saved marshal rally behind the company and take their leader to safety. If the companions are unsuccessful, the rescuer gives her lord his or her mount and dies fighting to defend his retreat.

Scene 4: Fight Beside Thengel King

Even as the battle spreads out across the snow-strewn plain and over the Snowbourn, Thengel King remains at the forefront, fighting always in the vanguard. The King's Guard, resolute till now, have slowly been falling due to

their fierce struggle. A **Battle** test will tell a trained eye that his foes are moving to surround the King...

- If their **Battle** test is successful, a player-hero can swiftly move to safeguard the King. If so, they face three Orcs of the White Mountains and two Dunlendings. If they fail, they face three Black Uruks and two Dunlendings.

Failing this scene leads to Thengel King being placed in mortal jeopardy and any player-character in this scene must participate in the **Variant scene: Save the King!** in place of scene 5.

Variant scene: Save the King!

Thengel King's horse is slain and he is caught beneath its flailing legs. Gazhúr Three-Deaths desires nothing more than to see the King butchered, and orders his warriors to press forward. Four Orcs of the White Mountains and three Dunlending Raiders per companion rush to slay the fallen King.

A successful roll of Athletics test is needed to reach the King's side in time, and then his foes must be defeated or driven off. Failure on the Athletics test results in Thengel being knocked unconscious. This fight goes till all enemies are defeated. If Thengel was knocked unconscious, at least one player-character must leave the field entirely to escort the King's supine body away from the battle. If all companions fall before their enemies, Thengel King is gravely wounded and what remains of his guard lose him amidst the bodies and swirling waters of the Snowbourn.

A cry goes up amidst the Eorlingas, as a roar of exaltation goes up amidst their enemies: the King is Dead! Add two to every type of foe the companions face in the subsequent scenes, to reflect the loss of morale among the Men of the Mark and the renewed ferocity of the Orcs and Dunlendings.

Thengel King is found after the Battle of the Snowbourn, but he is never a hale man again, weakened by his ordeal in both body and mind.

Scene 5: Rally the Rohirrim

As battle waxes, the rapidly piling bodies, steaming in the snow, may cause the cold hand of fear to trouble many hearts and some may look to flee. Those companions that can must rally the defenders to carry on fighting.

- A successful **Awe** or **Inspire** roll renews courage, and then the player-hero will need to lead the charge back into battle. There are three Orcs of the White Mountains and one Dunlending Raider for each companion. If they are mounted, they can indeed charge them.

If this scene ends in failure, many Riders flee the field, and the player-hero is left alone to fight on. In place of the following (and final) scene of the battle, the player-hero must complete the **Stand and Fight** variant scene.

Variant scene: Challenge Gazhúr Three-Deaths

A bold and daring hero might decide to challenge Gazhúr Three-Deaths to single combat.

- During the fifth and sixth scenes of the battle, a player-hero may attempt an Awe test against TN 18 in order to challenge Gazhúr Three-Deaths. If successful, the Orc Chief acknowledges their desire to die on his blade and accepts the single combat.

The fight lasts until one of the combatants lies dead. No one can help either warrior. Victory for a player-hero shatters the morale of the invaders: the number of foes fought in each subsequent scene is reduced by half; additionally, add 2 to the company's event success total.

Failure emboldens the Orcs and Dunlendings, adding an additional foe to each following event. The Eorlingas, at the least, are impressed by the companion and sing of their reckless bravery for generations. Their death counts as a Heroic Death.

Scene 6: Counter-charge!

The Orcs and Dunlendings have broken through the right flank and a valiant captain (Esmund or Midlryd) quickly organises a counter-charge against them. The captain leads from the front, and the éored scythes into the ranks of the Orcs. However, in doing so the captain pushes ever deeper into the swirling mob of Orcs and Dunlendings, dangerously so.

If the wild charge slows down, instead of routing the invaders, the captain might be pulled from his horse and dragged down. The player-heroes must intervene, and quickly.

- There are *six* Orcs of the White Mountain and two Dunlendings for each companion, but if they can first rally some Riders to their side with an **Inspire** or **Song** roll, this number is halved.

Failure to assist the captain results in his (or her) death.

Resolving the Battle

The Battle of the Snowbourn might be the victory that unites the Rohirrim and solidifies Thengel King's rule, or it might be one of the worst defeats in the history of Rohan and the first day of a long and dark era. There will be many heroes that day, many brave deeds and many fell strokes, but, sadly, many dead to be mourned and buried.

To determine the consequences of the battle, a total of successes and failures must now be calculated.

- Add one success for each scene completed successfully (variant scenes are not considered);
- If, for whatever reason, no one participated in a scene, add one failure.
- Subtract one success for each dead marshal or named captain;
- Subtract two successes if the companions attempted and failed the **Save the King!** Variant scene.

Then, consult the results listed below:

1: The Orcs crush the Riders and scatter them to the winds. Thengel King or one of the marshals survives and manages to hold up in Edoras or Dunharrow until spring, but the future for Rohan is grim indeed.

2: The Eorlingas have been defeated, but retain enough cohesion and numbers to retreat to Edoras or the hold of Dunharrow. The winter will be a long one of countering the Orc siege.

3-4: The battle is a victory for the Rohirrim, but it comes at a high cost. Gazhúr Three-Deaths is routed, but not soundly defeated, and will no doubt return again to trouble the Riddermark in a year or three.

5+: The outcome is a overwhelming victory for the Mark, with the army of Gazhúr Three-Deaths ridden down by the vengeful Eorlingas.

The Battle of Aldburg

If the King was forced to leave Edoras by the insubordination of both his marshals, the companions are subjected to a sad sight: the folk of the city fleeing with what few possessions they can carry, as the homes they leave behind are sacked. The great hall of Meduseld is defiled by Gazhúr Three-Deaths, and the Golden Hall is then set aflame, a fire that roars for days as the massive timbers burn.

After many days of skirmishing against the invading army, Thengel is finally able to muster his forces and face the enemy in open battle. Among his men are those Eastfolders that Cenric repaired in Aldburg, and the survivors of the forces of Westfold the King was able to gather after Éogar's defeat. Battle is eventually brought against the Orcs and their allies along the great West Road, ten miles from the gates of Aldburg.

The battle is resolved using the same scenes presented for the Battle of the Snowbourn, modifying them to suit the different location. Due to the open nature of the battlefield, all Riding tests made to Charge are resolved rolling **Athletics** against TN 14 (instead of TN 16, see page 137 of *Horse-lords of Rohan*).

When all scenes have been run, compare the number of successes the companions were able to obtain to the list below.

0: If no scenes are successfully completed, the day is lost, the King slain in battle and dark days lie ahead for Rohan.

1-2: The Rohirrim are defeated and must repair to their mountain sanctuaries to resume fighting another day.

3: The victory is narrow, but the Rohirrim will still count the day as one of glory and salvation.

4-5: Victory is assured, and the Orcs are routed.

- Epilogue -

After the battle come the cries of the wounded and dying, and either victory or defeat. The consequences of such a terrible fight affect the Rohirrim for many years, and inform young Théoden's experiences as he matures to adulthood.

Thengel King, Éogar, and Cenric may be dead, or estranged beyond reparation. Others, including Esmund and Mildryd Shielding along with additional Riders the company know, may well have fallen.

An Orc Victory

Should Gazhúr Three-Deaths be victorious, the defeat of the Eorlingas will mar the reign of Thengel King. The invaders overrun much of Westfold, terrorise the King's own demesne in the Folde and even burn and loot much of Eastfold. It will take years for the kingdom to recover, as only a few mountain holds can stand against the rampaging Orcs and Dunlendings.

It will not just be this invasion that throws the kingdom into chaos. More Orc bands from both the White Mountains and the Misty Mountains, along with Dunlendings, will descend to take advantage of the situation. The Wulfings will try to exercise their might, riding out from Frecasburg to raid and claim new territory in the Gap of Rohan and beyond. Strange and dark things will slip across the borders, crawl out from dark holes beneath the mountains, and slither across the Anduin from out of the East.

Eventually, Thengel King is forced to call upon Gondor for aid...

The coming years promise much adventure for the companions, but not much hope.

A Victory for the Mark

If the Eorlingas defeated the invaders at the Battle of the Snowbourn, then this day will be well remembered. A great victory such as this is the sort of thing that helps to unite a people and adds weight to the words of the victorious king. The player-heroes, whether they were instrumental in victory or whether they made sure the Rohirrim fought side by side instead of against one another, will be greatly lauded – or remembered in song if they fell in battle.

If the Eorlings won at the Battle of Aldburg, the consequences of the invasion are terrible, victory notwithstanding. Left unchecked, the Orcs and Dunlendings have spent their time looting and burning their way through fields and farms.

With several lords of the Mark dead or wounded grievously, the leadership of the realm is seriously weakened, and bands of raiders will be left free to kill and pillage with impunity for several years before the Eorlings can bring back the rule of the Kings of the Mark.

If both Esmund and Mildryd Shielding Survive

There will be a wedding after all. Both the bride and groom are warriors, and what better wedding garb for them than freshly-bound wounds? Having seen one another in the midst of battle, they are duly impressed, and what union might have been made out of duty or loyalty, is now one made out of mutual respect and honour.

If Esmund or Mildryd Shielding are Slain

If either Esmund or Mildryd are slain in the battle, there is great sorrow in Rohan, even if the day should be one of victory. Should the day have ended with peace between the two marshals, then there is always the chance that another pairing could be made, even made quickly, to signify the end of the feud. One of the player-heroes might even serve as a replacement. A cold-hearted proposition, but romance must be put aside in the name of peace.

If both the bride and groom are slain in the battle, their blood given to defend Rohan has a profound effect on the feuding marshals and their followers. Their blood, along with the blood of all who died in battle, joins Westfold and Eastfold together in as strong a manner as a marriage would have, for how can you kill a man in a feud whose brother died saving yours?

- A Wedding Feast -

Following the battle, there will be a wedding. Hopefully, it is that of Esmund and Mildryd Shielding, but perhaps circumstances have led to the marriage of another. The wedding ceremony is brief, as befits the Rohirrim. The bride and groom exchange vows of love, loyalty, and companionship. The King himself drapes leather thongs, much like those used to tie two draft horses together to pull one load, over the bride and grooms hands, and announces them as a married couple.

Following the wedding, there will is a feast, a feast not just of a wedding and not merely to celebrate a union between the bride and groom, but one that brings about the end of the feud and honours the recently fallen.

Bread and meat are plentiful, platters are passed around, and even those who have gathered outside the hall receive a haunch of beef and a horn of ale. Songs are sung, boasts are made and one can at last see once-bitter foes, even the two marshals, enjoying each other's company.

Following the feast, there will be some peace at last, for a time...

- Aftermath -

A few days after the wedding the guests will begin to leave, and overcrowded Edoras will soon return to normal. Before they depart the company is called once more to appear before the King.

"What am I to say to you that can compare to your deeds? There is no reward that I can bestow that can justly be set against your efforts in bringing peace to Rohan. Even so, I offer you these small tokens of my esteem, unworthy as I deem them against the glory you have achieved."

Thengel King gives each of the player-heroes a beautifully engraved ring of gold and silver, especially crafted for them. Each ring is worth 5 Treasure points, but their true value lies in raising a hero's effective Standing by 1 whenever they are dealing with any Eorling.

The King then presents various other gifts, new swords, horse blankets, and so forth, along with small chests of gold and silver, which amounts to 10 Treasure for each companion. He also grants a large appointed house in Edoras for the company's use, whenever they should find themselves in town.

Loremaster - Characters - Appendix

The following section lists all the Loremaster Characters that appear in *Oaths of Riddermark*, grouped by adventure, and the order in which they appear. There is a page reference for the first, or in some cases most useful appearance, as well as a reference to *Horse-lords of Rohan* where appropriate. Following the Loremaster Characters is a list of suggested names for Rohirrim and Dunlendings should they be needed.

Blood on the Snow

Ulfúr – Swaggering Rider of Rohan, a hater of Dunlendings, pg 8
The Reeve of Edoras – The representative of Thengel King, pg 8
Léora – Dark-haired leader of a Rohirrim band, pg 9
Imhar Far-Reach – a Dunlending hunter of some renown, also hunting the Horse-eater, pg 14
The Horse-eater – a monster, pg 17

Red Day Rising

Thengel King of Rohan, pg 20 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 12, 15)
Queen Morwen Steelsheen, pg 20 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 17)
Sunnifa, the lovely, golden-haired serving-woman to the Queen, pg 20 *(Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 18)
Heáfod, the old captain of the King's Guard, pg 20 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 19)
Young Prince Théoden, son of Thengel, pg 21 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 18)
Maerstan of Eastfold – a flyting rider-poet, pg 25
Ashgar of Westfold, – a flyting rider-poet, pg 25
Léothere Five-Fingers, minstrel of Meduseld, an unwelcome minstrel, pg 27 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 28)
Bída Softsong, apprentice of Léothere, pg 27
Cenric, Third Marshal of the Riddermark (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 34)
Esmund, son of Edwin of Eastfold, a brave captain, grim of face. Pg 23 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 35)
Gálmód – Foster Son of Cenric (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 34)
Rynelda Fast-rider, a messenger (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 58)
Esfled, Lady of Westfold, wife of Eogar, pg 40
Déormód - Wulfing, nephew to Frána, a grim rash fellow pg 37
Rhonwen, Dunlending, twin sister of Caswelun, pg 38
Caswelun, Dunlending, twin brother of Rhonwen, pg 40
Blódred of the Westfold or Eastfold, and embittered rider, pg 44
Mildryd Shielding, Shieldmaiden captain of Éogar, one of his chief lieutenants, daughter of Galwyn (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 42)
Fengel King – Thengel's father, pg 20 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 12)
Éogar of Westfold, Lord of the Hornburg, Second Marshal of the Riddermark, pg 22 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 41)
Erkenbrand, son of Eogar and Esfled, pg 34
Grimborn lord of Grimslade, pg 34 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 42)
Frana, Lord of the Wulfings, pg 37 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 57)

Wrath of the Riders

Éogar of Westfold, Lord of the Hornburg, Second Marshal of the Riddermark, pg 47 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 41)
Earda, daughter of Eardfara, wrinkled woman, farmer, pg 48
Léofward, son of Béoward, Captain of the fort at the Fords of Isen, an impatient and ruthless young man.
Mornun, an eight year old Dunlending hiding in a ruined vilage, pg 50
Cormlar father of Mornun and Maehrwen, Dunlending, pg 51
Meahrwen, daughter of Cormlar, sister of Mornun, pg 50
Cavarun of the Ironfolk, a hulking brute, pg 53
Logwhen of the Graves, woman warrior of the Ironfolk, pg 53
Caswelun, Dunlending, twin brother of Rhonwen, cousin to Boddatun, potential cheiftain of the Iron-folk, pg 55
Rhonwen, Dunlending, twin sister of Caswelun, cousin to Boddatun, potential cheiftain of the Iron-folk, pg 55

Boddatun cousin of Caswelun and Rhonwen, potential cheiftain of the Iron-folk, pg 55
Gutun the Singer, Dunlending, a disgraced chieftain? pg 51, 54
The Barrow-witch, a wise-woman of the Dunlendings, pg 58
The Grey Horse – a monster, pg 64

Black Horses, Black Deeds

Cenric, Third Marshal of the Riddermark, pg 67 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 34)
Lady Éofolda, the Lady of Stotfold, pg 69(*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 35)
Berevir, a once-proud man of Gondor, pg 70
The Horse-lord's Spectre, pg 74
Joral, a soldier of Gondor, pg 76
Hastred – Rider of Rohan, a messenger of Cenric, pg 77
Garhelm – Rider of Rohan, a messenger of Cenric, pg 77
Agents of Mordor – evil men, pg 78
Bandits from the South – followers of Hirdan, pg 80
Hilda of Eastfold, a Shieldmaiden of Rohan, pg 80
Hirdan – a bandit leader, and imposing brute, pg 85
Thengel King of Rohan, pg 86 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 12, 15)

Mentioned:
Theorl – a breeder of horses in a legend of T*he Speckled Roan*, pg 70

Below the Last Mountain

Grimborn lord of Grimslade, pg 89 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 12)
Éogar of Westfold, Lord of the Hornburg, Second Marshal of the Riddermark, pg 89 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 41)
Cenric, Third Marshal of the Riddermark, pg 89 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 34)
Rynelda Fast-rider, a messenger pg 90 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 58)
Various Riders of Rohan, pg 91
Gwya, Dunlending woman, escapee, kin of Déormód of the Wulfings, pg 95
Malthor the Axe-Bitten – Orc chieftain of the White Mountain, pg 99
Déormód - Wulfing, nephew to Frána, a grim rash fellow, pg 100
Gazhúr Three-Deaths, an orc chieftain pg 102 (*Horse Lords of Rohan* pg 60, 123)
Edelyn, Lady of Stanshelf, values heroic deeds over lofty words, pg 103

The Woes of Winter

Thengel King of Rohan, pg 107 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 12, 15)
Queen Morwen Steelsheen, pg 110 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 17)
Ceorl the Bold – a rider, murdered. Pg 112
Hild, a young Shieldmaiden, pg 113
Goldred – a merchant, pg 113
Esmund, son of Edwin of Eastfold, a brave captain, about to be wed, pg 113 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 35)
Mildryd Shielding, Shieldmaiden captain of Éogar, daughter of Galwyn about to be wed, pg 113 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 42)
Swiftmane, a horse of some quality, sadly slain
Rynelda Fast-rider, a messenger, pg 115 (*Horse-lords of Rohan* pg 58)
Gazhúr Three-Deaths, an orc chieftain pg 116 (*Horse Lords of Rohan* pg 60, 123)

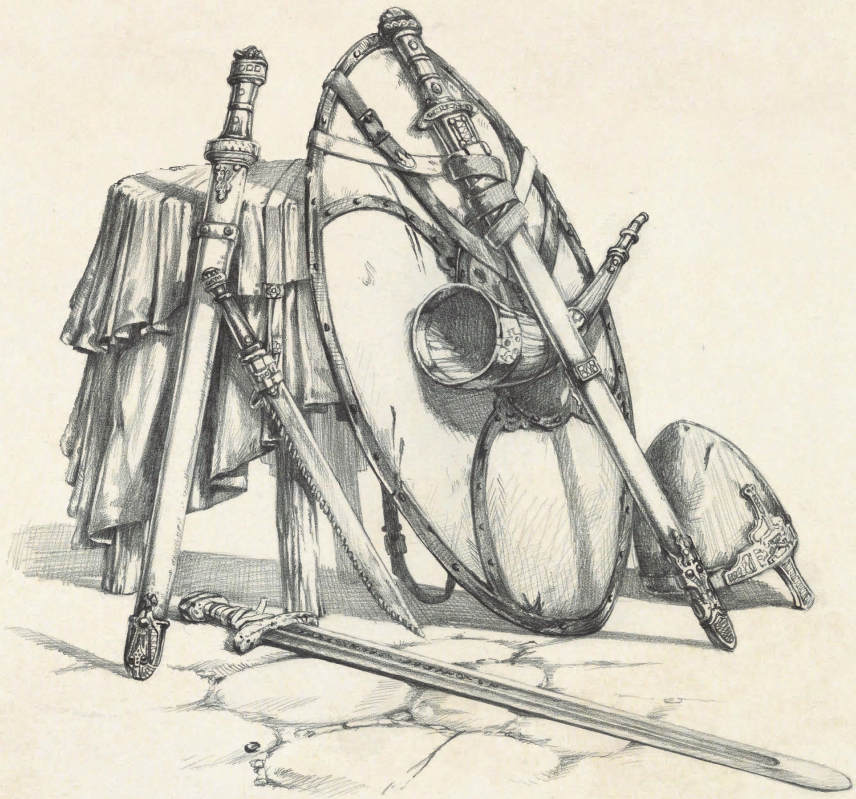
Typical Rohirrim Names

Aldor, Baldor, Brego, Brytta, Ceorl, Déor, Déorwine, Dernhelm, Dúnhere, Elfhelm, Elfhild, Eofor, Éomund, Eorl, Éothain, Éowyn, Erkenbrand, Fastred, Fengel, Folca, Folcwine, Folcred, Folda, Fréa, Fréawine, Freca, Gálmód, Gamling, Gárulf, Gléowine, Goldwine, Gram, Grim, Gríma, Grimbold, Guthláf, Háma, Harding, Helm, Herefara, Herubrand, Hild, Horn, Théoden, Théodwyn, Wídfara, Wulf.

Typical Dunlending Names

Aedin, Aer, Ailsa, Ainsar, Attus, Aurog, Banoc, Beolain, Biroth, Breavel, Brina, Brys, Cael, Casferoch, Cernoc, Comlar, Coras, Cuglas, Dalva, Derc, Dianach, Domnar, Dumnoval, Eisa, Emon, Etrer, Finathas, Finsel, Forsa, Gwya, Imhar, Iolun, Ivsa, Lakdar, Lon, Losvo, Madrach, Maerbrach, Malduin, Nynren, Nynvia, Osair, Ralsora, Senbra, Sinna, Soroth, Talmach, Torannen, Truis, Tueren, Unna, Unthas, Veroch, Vilen, Vron.

Pre-generated Character Sheets



Riders of - Rohan -

Aelfilda

Your uncle taught you everything he knew of field and stream, turning you into a passing hunter, but prey animals have never been the quarry you sought. What you hunt is knowledge. It has never been enough for you to know which birds will nest in the forest as opposed to the fields, you need to know *why*. On your 'quest' you've learned many strange, wonderful and useful things, along with the painful truth that no matter how long you hunt, you will never know everything you wish to.

the One Ring™

Name: Aelfilda

Culture: Rider of Rohan

Standard of Living: Martial

Cultural Blessing: Fey Mood (enter a battle-fury on an ᚠ or ᚹ result on your attack or Protection rolls)

Calling: Scholar

Shadow weakness Lure of Secrets

Experience
Total

Valour 1

Wisdom 2

- TRAITS -

Specialities: Beast-lore, Riddermark-lore, Rhymes of Lore

Distinctive Features: Curious, Wary

- ATTRIBUTES -

	Favoured	
Body	7	6
Heart	7	5
Wits	6	3

- COMMON SKILLS -

Awe	■■□□□□	Inspire	■□□□□□	Persuade	■□□□□□	personality	✧✧✧
Athletics	■■■□□□	Travel	■■□□□□	Stealth	■□□□□□	movement	✧✧✧
Awareness	■□□□□□	Insight	■■□□□□	Search	■□□□□□	perception	✧✧✧
Explore	■□□□□□	Healing	□□□□□□	Hunting	■■□□□□	survival	✧✧✧
Song	■■□□□□	Courtesy	■□□□□□	Riddle	□□□□□□	custom	✧✧✧
Craft	■□□□□□	Battle	■■□□□□	Lore	■■■□□□	vocation	✧✧✧

- SKILL GROUPS -

- WEAPON SKILLS -

Sword	■■□□□□	Bow	■□□□□□	Dagger	■□□□□□
_____	□□□□□□	_____	□□□□□□	_____	□□□□□□

Damage
6
Ranged

Parry
3
Shield

Armour
3d
Head gear

- REWARDS -

- VIRTUES -

Virtue: Old Songs & Children's Tales

(When you succeed in a roll using **Inspire**, **Travel**, **Insight**, **Healing**, or **Riddle** upgrade the quality of the roll by one level. If you got a ᚹ on the Feat Die you may raise your Hope by one, once a session.)

- GEAR -

weapon Sword	damage 5	edge 10	injury 16	enc 2
weapon Bow	damage 5	edge 10	injury 14	enc 1
weapon	damage	edge	injury	enc

armour: Mail-shirt		enc 12
headgear:		enc
shield:		enc
horse: Radhors (Travel Horse)		
(-6 Encumbrance reduction when mounted.)		

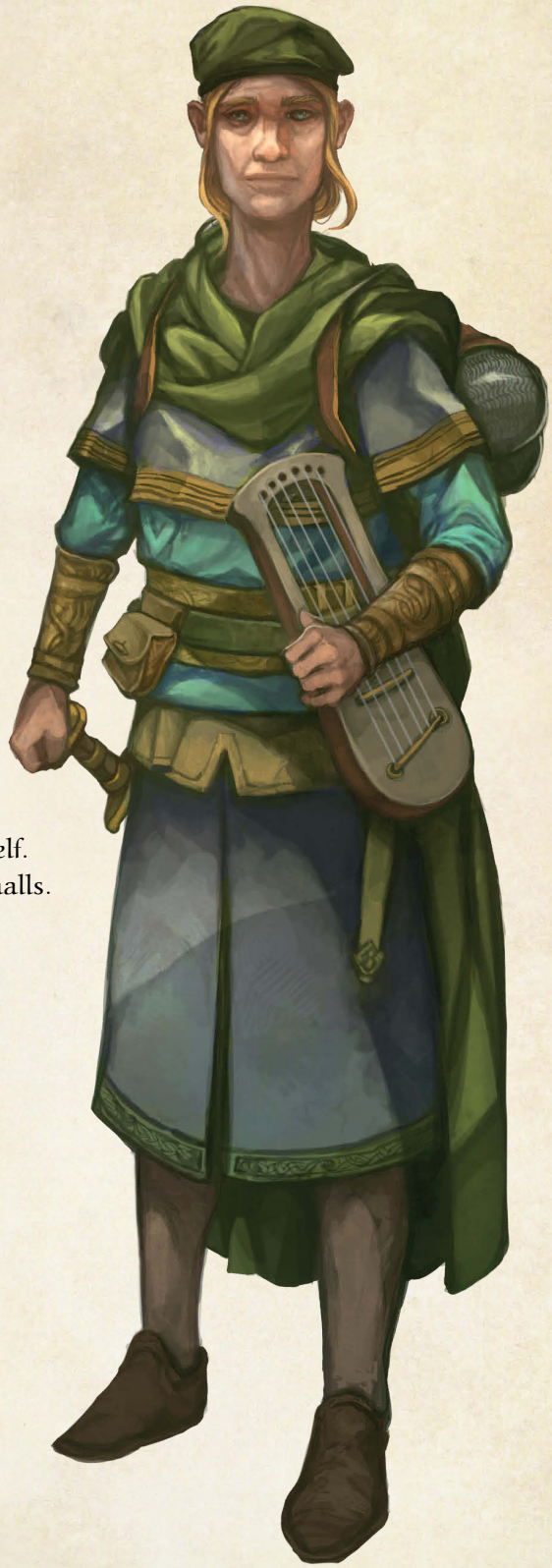
Endurance
Rating 27
15
Fatigue

Hope
Rating 13
Shadow

Weary ◯
Miserable ◯
Wounded ◯

Riders of - Rohan -

Dúnhere



Many minstrels are content to find a generous lord and an honoured place by the fire, but not you. The fires of Rohan's history will not ring true in your songs if you haven't experienced what they are meant to convey, or so you tell yourself. Perhaps you are just meant for more than mead halls.

the One Ring™

Name: Dúnhere

Culture: Rider of Rohan

Standard of Living: Martial

Cultural Blessing: Fey Mood (enter a battle-fury on an ᚠ or ᚹ result on your attack or Protection rolls)

Calling: Scholar

Shadow weakness Lure of Secrets

Experience
Total

Valour 2

Wisdom 1

- TRAITS -

Specialities: Minstrelsy, Rhymes of Lore, Story-telling

Distinctive Features: Adventurous, True-hearted

- ATTRIBUTES -

	Favoured	
Body	8	5
Heart	6	5
Wits	6	4

- COMMON SKILLS -

Awe		Inspire		Persuade		personality	
Athletics		Travel		Stealth		movement	
Awareness		Insight		Search		perception	
Explore		Healing		Hunting		survival	
Song		Courtesy		Riddle		custom	
Craft		Battle		Lore		vocation	

- SKILL GROUPS -

- WEAPON SKILLS -

Sword		Bow		Dagger	

Damage 5
Ranged

Parry 4
Shield

Armour 4d
Head gear

- REWARDS -

Ancient Mail from Gondor

(Mail Armour)

- VIRTUES -

- GEAR -

weapon Sword	damage 5	edge 10	injury 16	enc 2
weapon Bow	damage 5	edge 10	injury 14	enc 1
weapon	damage	edge	injury	enc

armour: Ancient Coat of Mail — enc 16

headgear: — enc

shield: — enc

horse: Lyre, Radhors (Travel Horse)

(-6 Encumbrance reduction when mounted.)

Endurance
Rating 27
19 Fatigue

Hope
Rating 13
Shadow

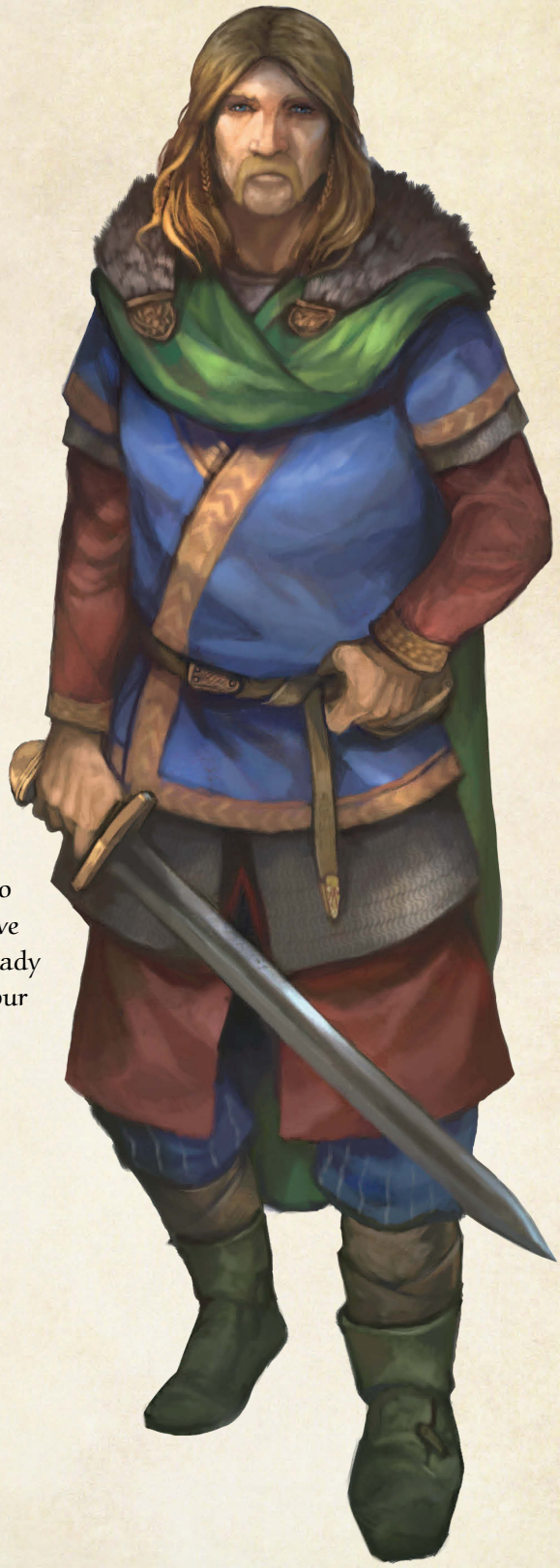
Weary

Miserable

Wounded

Riders of - Rohan -

Herubrand



Forever at odds with yourself, in your heart you would prefer peace, but you know you were born for war. When you speak of your hopes for the future, your people hear the thunder of hooves on the Field of Celebrant and whisper that one of the war leaders of old has returned to lead the Eorlingas in the dark days ahead. You've not yet become the man you will be, yet already warriors many winters your senior heed your counsels.

The One Ring™

Name: Herubrand

Culture: Rider of Rohan

Standard of Living: Martial

Cultural Blessing: Fey Mood (enter a battle-fury on an ᚠ or ᚹ result on your attack or Protection rolls)

Calling: Warden

Shadow weakness Lure of Power

Experience
Total

Valour 1

Wisdom 2

- TRAITS -

Specialities: Riddermark-lore, Horsemanship, Shadow-lore

Distinctive Features: Proud, Steadfast

- ATTRIBUTES -

	Favoured	
Body	7	6
Heart	7	4
Wits	6	4

- COMMON SKILLS -

Awe	■■□□□□	*Inspire*	■■■□□□	*Persuade*	■□□□□□	personality	✧✧✧
Athletics	■■■□□□	*Travel*	■■□□□□	*Stealth*	□□□□□□	movement	✧✧✧
Awareness	■□□□□□	*Insight*	■■□□□□	*Search*	□□□□□□	perception	✧✧✧
Explore	■□□□□□	*Healing*	□□□□□□	*Hunting*	■■□□□□	survival	✧✧✧
Song	■■□□□□	*Courtesy*	■□□□□□	*Riddle*	□□□□□□	custom	✧✧✧
Craft	■□□□□□	*Battle*	■■■□□□	*Lore*	■□□□□□	vocation	✧✧✧

- WEAPON SKILLS -

Sword	■■□□□□	Bow	■□□□□□	Dagger	■□□□□□
_____	□□□□□□	_____	□□□□□□	_____	□□□□□□

Damage
6
Ranged

Parry
4
+2
Shield

Armour
3d
+4
Head gear

- REWARDS -

- VIRTUES -

Master of Doom

(at the start of an Adventuring phase, reduce your maximum Hope to raise your maximum Endurance)

- GEAR -

weapon Sword	damage 5	edge 10	injury 16	enc 2
weapon Bow	damage 5	edge 10	injury 14	enc 1
weapon	damage	edge	injury	enc

armour:	Mail-shirt	enc 12
headgear:	Helm	enc 6
shield:	Shield	enc 2
horse:	Radhors (Travel Horse)	
	(-6 Encumbrance reduction when mounted.)	

Endurance
Rating 26
23
Fatigue

Hope
Rating 12
Shadow

Weary

Miserable

Wounded

Riders of - Rohan -

Saewara of Starkhorn

For others, the needle and the hearth; for you, the spear, ever the spear. You've given your life to mastering it, a quest you know which has reached a point where your already impressive skill can only be improved on the field of battle. Like all true Eorlingas, you sing when you kill.

the One Ring™

Name: Saewara of Starkhorn

Culture: Rider of Rohan

Standard of Living: Martial

Cultural Blessing: Fey Mood (enter a battle-fury on an ᚠ or ᚹ result on your attack or Protection rolls)

Calling: Wanderer

Shadow weakness Lure of Secrets

Experience
Total

Valour 2

Wisdom 1

- TRAITS -

Specialities: Folk-lore, Horsemanship, Woodwright

Distinctive Features: Fierce, Swift

- ATTRIBUTES -

Body 7 (Favoured 10)

Heart 4 (Favoured 6)

Wits 3 (Favoured 4)

- COMMON SKILLS -

Awe	■■■□□□	Inspire	■□□□□□	Persuade	■□□□□□	personality	✧✧✧
Athletics	■■■□□□	Travel	■■□□□□	Stealth	□□□□□□	movement	✧✧✧
Awareness	□□□□□□	Insight	■■□□□□	Search	□□□□□□	perception	✧✧✧
Explore	■□□□□□	Healing	□□□□□□	Hunting	■■□□□□	survival	✧✧✧
Song	■■□□□□	Courtesy	■□□□□□	Riddle	□□□□□□	custom	✧✧✧
Craft	■□□□□□	Battle	■■□□□□	Lore	■□□□□□	vocation	✧✧✧

- SKILL GROUPS -

- WEAPON SKILLS -

(Spears)	■■□□□□	Bow	■□□□□□	Dagger	■□□□□□
_____	□□□□□□	_____	□□□□□□	_____	□□□□□□

Damage 7 (Ranged)

- REWARDS -

Grievous Spear

- VIRTUES -

Parry 3 (+2 Shield)

- GEAR -

weapon	Spear	damage 5	edge 9	injury 14	enc 2
weapon	Grievous Spear	damage 9	edge 9	injury 16	enc 4
weapon		damage	edge	injury	enc

Armour 4d (Head gear)

armour:	Coat of mail	enc 16
headgear:		enc
shield:	Shield	enc 3
horse:	Radhors (Travel Horse)	
	(-6 Encumbrance reduction when mounted.)	

Endurance Rating 26, Fatigue 23

Hope Rating 12, Shadow

Weary ◯

Miserable ◯

Wounded ◯

Riders of - Rohan -

Thuna

Since you were a small girl, your sharp dark eyes have missed little and your knowing glance is uncomfortable to those who would keep secrets from you. Your family's line is justly famed for producing shrewd and capable guards for the Riddermark for many generations – and this tradition has continued with you. Your unusual dark hair and eyes marked you out as a child and you learned to fight from a very young age. What you are yet to know is your own origin as a foundling child of Dunlending heritage.

the One Ring™

Name: Thuna

Culture: Rider of Rohan (Shieldmaiden)

Cultural Blessing: Faithful beyond Fear

Calling: Warden

Standard of Living: Martial

(When making a Fear test, use favoured Heart. If successful add one Success dice to all attacks against that creature.)

Shadow weakness Lure of Power

Experience
Total

Valour 2

Wisdom 1

- TRAITS -

Specialities: Shadow-lore, Story-telling, Woodwright

Distinctive Features: Generous, Keen-eyed

- ATTRIBUTES -

Body	6	8	favoured
Heart	6	9	favoured
Wits	2	3	favoured

- COMMON SKILLS -

Awe	■■■□□□	Inspire	■□□□□□	Persuade	■□□□□□	personality	✧✧✧
Athletics	■■■□□□	Travel	■■□□□□	Stealth	□□□□□□	movement	✧✧✧
Awareness	□□□□□□	Insight	■■■□□□	Search	□□□□□□	perception	✧✧✧
Explore	■□□□□□	Healing	■■□□□□	Hunting	■■□□□□	survival	✧✧✧
Song	■■□□□□	Courtesy	■□□□□□	Riddle	□□□□□□	custom	✧✧✧
Craft	■□□□□□	Battle	■■□□□□	Lore	■□□□□□	vocation	✧✧✧

- SKILL GROUPS -

- WEAPON SKILLS -

Sword	■■□□□□	Bow	■□□□□□	Dagger	■□□□□□
_____	□□□□□□	_____	□□□□□□	_____	□□□□□□

Damage
6
Ranged

- REWARDS -

Reinforced Shield

- VIRTUES -

Parry
2
+2
Shield

- GEAR -

weapon Sword	damage 5	edge 10	injury 16	enc 2
weapon Bow	damage 5	edge 10	injury 14	enc 1
weapon	damage	edge	injury	enc

Armour
4d
Head gear

armour:	Coat of mail	enc 16
headgear:		enc
shield:	Shield	enc 3
horse:	Radhors (Travel Horse)	
	(-6 Encumbrance reduction when mounted.)	

Endurance
Rating 28
22
Fatigue

Hope
Rating 14
Shadow

Weary ◯
Miserable ◯
Wounded ◯

Riders of - Rohan -

Wulf

There was a time when you were carefree, boastful as the rest of your éored, but then a night came that saw too much mead drunk and too much blood spilt. The man you were before that night is dead. You managed to pay the weregilds on the slain, but the cost all but destroyed your family. Once your debts were paid, you severed all ties to your family and kin to spare them any more dishonour. Now you roam over Rohan, occasionally joining sorties against the Orcs, seeking redemption or, perhaps, a death worthy of song.

the One Ring™

Name: Wulf

Culture: Rider of Rohan

Standard of Living: Martial

Cultural Blessing: Fey Mood (enter a battle-fury on an ᚠ or ᚠ result on your attack or Protection rolls)

Calling: Slayer

Shadow weakness Curse of Vengeance

Experience
Total

Valour 2

Wisdom 1

- TRAITS -

Specialities: Enemy-lore (Orcs), Horsemanship, Riddermark-lore

Distinctive Features: Grim, Reckless

- ATTRIBUTES -

Body 7 (favoured 9)

Heart 5 (favoured 6)

Wits 2 (favoured 5)

- COMMON SKILLS -

Awe	■■□□□□	Inspire	■□□□□□	Persuade	■□□□□□
Athletics	■■■■□□	Travel	■■□□□□	Stealth	■■□□□□
Awareness	■□□□□□	Insight	■■□□□□	Search	□□□□□□
Explore	■□□□□□	Healing	■□□□□□	Hunting	■■□□□□
Song	■■□□□□	Courtesy	■□□□□□	Riddle	□□□□□□
Craft	■□□□□□	Battle	■■□□□□	Lore	■□□□□□

- SKILL GROUPS -

personality	✦✦✦
movement	✦✦✦
perception	✦✦✦
survival	✦✦✦
custom	✦✦✦
vocation	✦✦✦

- WEAPON SKILLS -

(Spears)	■■□□□□	Sword	■□□□□□	Dagger	■□□□□□
_____	□□□□□□	_____	□□□□□□	_____	□□□□□□

Damage 7 (Ranged)

- REWARDS -

Glinting Spear

(Great Spear +4 Injury on a charge)

- VIRTUES -

Parry 2 (Shield)

- GEAR -

weapon	Great Spear	damage 9	edge 9	injury 16	enc 4
weapon		damage	edge	injury	enc
weapon		damage	edge	injury	enc

Armour 5d (Head gear)

armour:	Mail hauberk	enc	20
headgear:		enc	
shield:		enc	
horse:	Radhors (Travel Horse)		

(-6 Encumbrance reduction when mounted.)

Endurance Rating 27, Fatigue 24

Hope Rating 13, Shadow

Weary ◯

Miserable ◯

Wounded ◯

- Index -

Below the last Mountain 88
Adventuring Phase 88
Ambushing the Lookouts 98
Attacking the Orc Camp 98
(The) Battle 99
(The) Betrothal of Esmund and Mildyrd was Successfully Arranged 89
Catching the Orcs on the Trail 97
Charging Straight In 98
(If the) Company Battles with the Wulfings 101
(The) Company Fails to Convince Déormód or Chooses to Fight 101
(The) Company was Unsuccessful in Ending the Feud 89
Dark Tidings 90
(The) Doom of the Dunlendings 105
(Meeting with) Edelyn of Stanshelf 103
Epilogue – Return to Grims lade 104
Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter 104
(The) Eye of Mordor 89
(The) Fate of the Captives 105
Flee for Stanshelf 102
(A) Fork in the Road 96
Hazards of the White Mountains 94
(The) Heroes' Riders 91
(The) Honour of the Eorlingas 104
Ice Shadow 93
Introductions and Interaction 100, 104
Malthor, the Axe-Bitten 99
New Fellowship Undertaking – Open Stanshelf as a Sanctuary 104
Parley with the Wulfings 100
Part Five – Distant Kin 100
Part Four – The Orc Camp 97
Part One – The Two Marshals 89
Part Six – Hunters and Hunted 101
Part Three – The Raider's Trail 93
Part Two – The Villages of West-march 91
(Following the) Raider's Trail 93
Relations with the Marshals 89
(The) Road Less Travelled 96
Scouting the Camp 98
Set Tolerance 100, 103
Sidetrails 94
Sidetrail 1 - The Lost Orcs 94
Sidetrail 2 - The Escapees 95
Sidetrail 3 - The Ambush 96
Stand and Fight! 102
Stanshelf 103
(The) State of Affairs 89
Stonegap 92
Turning the Slaves 98
(The) Wulfings Approach 100

Black Horses, Black Deeds 66
Adventuring Phase 66
Aftermath 87
Agents of Mordor 78
Attacking the Tower 84
Bandits from the South 80
(The) Bandits' Treasure 85
(Entering the) Barrow 74
(Playing) Berevir 71
Berevir of Gondor 70, 72
(A) Decision to Make 72
Departure 68
Enemy Intelligence 79
Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter 68
(The) Eye of Mordor 67
Fellowship Phase 87
Hard-won Horses 78
(Suggested) Hazard Episode – Orcs in the Ointment 77
Hilda of Eastfold 81
(Negotiating with) Hirdan 82
Hirdan as a Reoccurring Villain 84
Hirdan, Bandit Leader 85
Hirdan's Plan 84
(The) Horse-lord's Barrow 73
(The) Horse-lord's Hoard 76
(The) Horse-lord's Spectre 74, 76
Interaction 68, 75, 83, 86
Introduction 68, 75, 83, 86
(The) Journey 73
Meeting the Marshal 67
Part Five – Turning the Tables 79
Part Four – Merchants Most Foul 77
Part One – By Order of the Marshal 67
Part Seven – Victory and Regret 86
Part Six – Sharp Words 81
Part Three – Fury in the Darkness 72
Part Two – The Village of Stotfold 69
Picking up the Pieces 81
(The) Prisoner 76
Resolution 77
Set Tolerance 67, 75, 82,86
Siege or Storm 82
(The) Speckled Roan 70
(In the Court of) Thengel King 86
To the Rescue 79
(The) Tower of Grass 82
(The) Truth about Berevir 71
Where there is Smoke 77
(The) Wounded and the Dead 80

Blood on the Snow 7
Adventuring Phase 7
Companies Gather 8
(The) Cursed Gully 13
Epilogue 18
(The) First Steading 10
(Into the) Grimgelad 16
Hazard Suggestions 10
All Roads the Same 10
Blinding Blizzard 10
(The) Hoard 18
(The) Horse-eater 17
(The) Horse-eater's Hollow 16
How to Kill a Snow-Troll 18
(The) Hunters Hunted 13
Imhar 14
In Search of Adventure 8
Interaction 14
Introductions 14
(The) Map 12
Map locations 11
Boundary Rocks 11
(The) Main Longhouse 11
Outbuildings 11
Trees 11
Stream 1

On the Road 10
(The) Other Companies 9
Part Four – The Horse-eater 16
Part One – To Edoras! 7
Part Three – Stepping into Darkness 13
Part Two – Northward Bound 10
(The) Reeve's Address 8
(The) Second Steading 11
Secret Plans 10
Set Tolerance 14
Ulfúr is Back 17
(An) Unlikely Meeting 14

Introduction 4
How to Use this Guide 6
(The) Passing of Years 6
(The) Trials of Thengel King 6
We Come from the North! 4

Loremaster Characters Appendix 125
Below the Last Mountain 126
Black Horses, Black Deeds 126
Blood on the Snow 125
Red Day Rising 125
Typical Dunlending Names 126
Typical Rohirrim Names 126
The Woes of Winter 126
Wrath of the Riders 125

Pre-generated Character Sheets 127
Aelfilda 128
Dúnhere 130
Herubrand 132
Saewara of Starkhorn 134
Thuna 136
Wulf 138

Red Days Rising 19
Adventuring Phase 19
After the Storm 33
Ashgar 26
At the Crossings 25
Battle 38
Blódred 44
Caswelun 40
(Persuading) Cenric 32
(At) Cenric's Camp 31
Cenric's Decision 32
(The) Company Sets Out 24
Confronting the Raiders 38
Encounter Goal 21
(Beyond the) Entwade 27
Éogar 33
Éogar and Mildryd 37
Éogar's Will 41
Epilogue 45
(If) Esfled is Lost 40
Esmund 31
Fairy-fire 29
Flyte or Fight? 26
Gálmód 31
(The) Gathering at the Entwade 42
If they Return in Sorrow 43
If they Return in Triumph 43
Give and Take 28
Hard Words 43
(The) Hideout 36
How Old is Théoden? 21
Interaction 22, 26, 32, 41, 44
Into the Thunder 29
Introduction 26, 32
Joining the Marshal 36
(A) Kingly Reward 31
Maerstan 26
Meeting the King 20
Men from Frecasburg 37
Midday in Edoras 20
(The) Old Camp 36
Part Five – A Blood-Red Evening 42
Part Four – The River-reavers 33
Part One – Wisdom of the Riders 19
Part Three – Where the Sky-Spear Falls 27
Part Two – Flytes at the Ford 24
(A) Proposal for Esmund 32
(A) Proposal for Mildryd 40
Pursuit 38
(The) Raiders' Warband 39
Recent Events in the Feud of the Marshals 23
(The) Red Entwade 45
Restraining the Riders 27
Rhonwen 38
Riddles and Rumours 28
(The) Riders of Westfold 35
Riding with Esmund 42
Riding with Mildryd 42
(The) River-reavers 34
Set Tolerance 21, 25, 32, 41, 43
Songs in the Sunset 25
(Stopping the) Stampede 29
(Trapped in the) Stampede 30
(Trouble with the) Stampede 30
(A) Storm Approaches 29
Thengel 22
Thengel's Task 23
Tying a Knot 23
(An) Urgent Errand 34
(The) Wandering Minstrel 27
Warriors of the Gáesela 39
(Into the) West-march 35
(Trouble in the) West-march 34
Who's Who 23
(The) Worries of the King 22
Worthy Qualities 21
Boldness 21
Generosity 21
Loyalty 21
Pride 21
Truthfulness 21
Wisdom 21

(The) Woes of Winter 106
Adventuring Phase 106
Aftermath 126
(The) Army of Gazhúr Three-Deaths 116
(The) Arrest of Hild "Kinslayer" 113
(The) Battle of Aldburg 122
(The) Battle of the Snowbourn 119
Scene 1: The Opening Charge 120
Scene 2: Struggle at the Ford 120
Scene 3: To the Rescue 120
Scene 4: Fight Beside Thengel King 120
Scene 5: Rally the Rohirrim 121
Scene 6: Counter-charge! 122
Variant scene: Challenge Gazhúr Three-Deaths 121
Variant scene: Save the King! 121
Variant scene: Stand and Fight 120

Bonds of Blood 116
Driving Cattle 109
Éogar and the Charge of the Helmingas 117
Epilogue 123
Evaluating the Tension 111
(The) Eye of Mordor 106
Forth Eorlingas! 119
Friendly Rivals 108
Hunting Game 109
Interaction 118
Introduction 117
(The) King's Plan 117
(The) Luck of Fools 114
(The) Marshals' Debate 117
(An) Orc Victory 123
Part Five – Red Fell the Snow 118
Part Four – Fell Tidings 115
Part One – A Gathering of Rivals 107
Part Three – The Bride's Horse 113
Part Two – The Murder of Ceorl the Bold 111
Picking Flowers 109
Proper Caution 114
Resolving the Battle 122
(The) Retreat of Cenric 117
Set Tolerance 117
Sheath Your Swords 112
Solving the Murder 113
(A) Summons from the King 107
Unlikely Allies 119
(A) Very Long Week 108
(A) Victory for the Mark 123
If Esmund or Mildryd Shielding are Slain 123
If both Esmund and Mildryd Shielding Survive 123
(A) Wedding Feast 124
Wedding Preparations 108
(The) Week's Trials 110
Trial 1. Horsing About 110
Trial 2. Sharp Words 110
Trial 3. "Friendly" Competition 111
Trial 4. Prank Gone Astray 111
Trial 5. Sheer Boredom 111
What if the Wedding was never Arranged? 107
Whom do you Serve? 107

Wrath of the Riders 46
Abandoning the Mission 60
Adventuring Phase 46
Aftermath 65
Attacking the Cave 52
Bad Blood 49
(About the) Barrow-witch 58
(The) Barrow-witch 58, 62
(The) Barrow-witch's Price 61
(The) Beasts in the Cave 52
Beyond the Wall 55
(The) Chieftain Speaks 55
(The) Chieftain's Decision 57
Determining Tolerance 61
Drowning in Black Water 63
(Chosen) Dunlending Warriors 54
(A) Dunlendish Great Hall 56
(An) Earth-Song to Bind It 63
(The) Eye of Mordor 46
(The) Feast 58
(The) First Village 50
(The) Fords of Isen 48
(The) Great Black Woods 52
(The) Grey Horse 63, 64
(The) Grey Horse and the Silver Mere 59
If they Agree 60
If they Decline 60
(The) Grey Horse Strikes 63
(Shaming) Gutun the Singer 54
Gutun's Grudge 58
(The) Hero's Portion 58
(The) Hoard of the Grey Horse 64
Hospitality 56
If there is a Fight 54
Interaction 57, 61
(The) Iron-folk's Gratitude 65
(The) Iron-folk's Oath 60
(The) King's Will 47
Lore of the Iron-folk 51
Part Five – The Chieftain and the Barrow-witch 56
Part Four – Warriors' Words 52
Part One – The Marshal's Command 47
Part Six – The Grey Horse 60
Part Three – Into the Red Moor 50
Part Two – Beyond the Crossings 48
Phantoms in the Fen 62
Pits and Stones 55
(Jouneys in the) Red Moor 49
(The) Red Moor 49
Saving the Child 52
(The) Second Village 50
Set Tolerance 56
Songs of the Wise-woman 62
Three Deaths or None 59
(An) Uncommon Parley 53
Waiting for the Goblins 52
(A) Water-Song to Lure It 63
(The) Welcoming-Party 53
(On the) Westfold Road 48
Where are the Rebels? 48
Which Chieftain? 56
Why us? 47
(Confronting the) Wise-woman 62
(The) Woodkin 51

Smaug has been defeated, the Battle of Five Armies has been won, and Bilbo has returned to the Shire. But much danger still remains, and from the Orc-holds of the mountains to the dark and corrupt depths of Mirkwood a darkness waits, recovering its strength, laying its plans, and slowly extending its shadow...

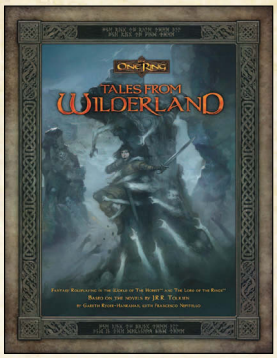
The One Ring Core Rules
CB71009

With rich and detailed background information, rules that focus on Tolkien's themes, character types unique to the world and a setting that changes as the Tale of Years progresses, when you play *The One Ring Roleplaying Game* you really feel like you are exploring Middle-earth.

Adventurer's Companion
CB71011

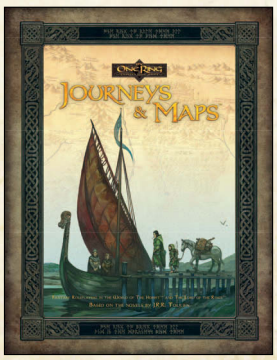
Packed with advice to make your player-hero truly feel a part of Middle-earth, along with new character options and exciting new rules.

Tales from Wilderland
CB71003



Containing seven ready-to-play adventures, complete scenarios that can be played separately, or as an epic campaign spanning across a number of years.

Journeys & Maps
CB71013

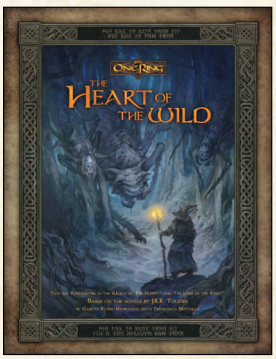


A set of four, double sided, large format maps covering the greater part of known Middle-earth plus a 32-page softcover supplement containing invaluable additions to your Journeys in Middle-earth.

Loremaster's Screen and Laketown Guide
CB71004

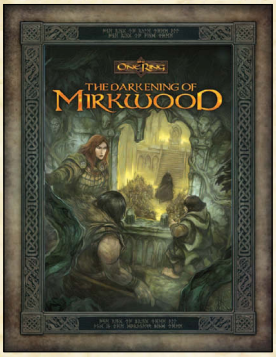
The 32 page Lake-town Guide presents this fascinating locale in detail, along iwht a new playable Culture – Men of the Lake. Also included a high quality Loremaster's Screen, which presents useful information for easy reference during a game.

The Heart of the Wild
CB71007



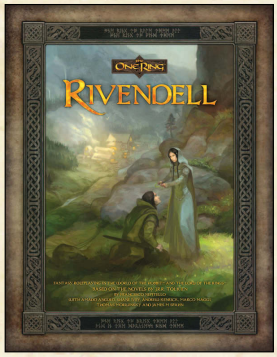
A setting guide describing the lands of the River and the Forest – the Vales of Anduin along the banks of the Great River, and the foreboding forest of Mirkwood.

The Darkening of Mirkwood
CB71005



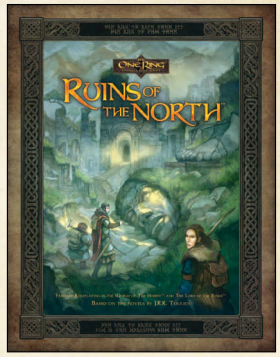
The Darkening of Mirkwood is a complete campaign for *The One Ring*, played out over the course of three decades. It allows you to tell your own epic saga, following your heroes in their quest as the tale of years unfolds before them.

Rivendell
CB71006



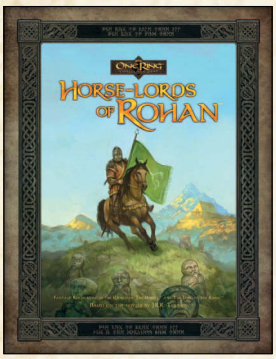
This setting supplement will take your adventures west across the Misty Mountains to the Last Homely House, expanding play into eastern Eriador. *Rivendell* includes playable cultures for Elves of Rivendell and Rangers of the North.

Ruins of the North
CB71010



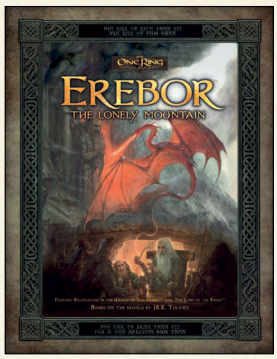
Six ready-to-play adventures set in and around Rivendell, these complete scenarios can be played separately or as an epic series.

Horse-lords of Rohan
CB71012



The Lands of Rohan, the ancient Forest of Fangorn and the Tower of Isengard are all detailed in this supplement, along with rules for mountain combat and playing Rohirrim and Dunlendings.

Erebor - The Lonely Mountain
CB71015



Packed with new information on some of the best-known locales and characters described in *The Hobbit*, this invaluable guide describes the Dwarf-hold of Erebor, the city of Dale, and the surrounding regions. Erebor includes three new playable cultures.

Bree
CB71019

Surrounded by deserted and dangerous lands, and watched over by the mysterious Rangers of the North, Bree is an ideal place to break a journey, or to begin a new one! Featuring loads of setting information, a new playable culture, and three new adventures in the Breeland.

The One Ring Deluxe Dice Set
CB71020

Beautiful and unique deluxe dice set for *The One Ring* by the dicemasters at Q Workshop.

CUBICLE 7 SEVEN

cubicle7.co.uk
facebook.com/Cubicle7Entertainment
twitter.com/cubicle7